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JANE DUGDALE

IN MEMORY OF HER BROTHER

RICHARD L. DUGDALE

JANE CAMERON.

VOL. I.

LONDON

PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.

NEW-STREET SQUARE

MEMOIRS

OF

JANE CAMERON,

FEMALE CONVICT.

BY A PRISON MATRON,

AUTHOR OF

"FEMALE LIFE IN PRISON."

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THIS WORK

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BY THE

LATE RIGHT HON. AND MOST REV.

RICHARD WHATELY, D.D.

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN,

WHOSE KIND WORDS,

GENIAL CRITICISM, AND UNLOOKED-FOR PATRONAGE

WILL BE

EVER GRATEFULLY REMEMBERED

BY

ONE OF THE MANY

WHO MOURN FOR HIS IRREPARABLE LOSS.

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PART I.

'GLASGIE LIFE.'

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

It has become my task to attempt the history of a female convict—of a woman who for many years was well known to prisoners and prison matrons. Such a life as I will attempt to describe, if honestly and simply written, I think may have the power to teach its moral, even with that weak and erring class of which Jane Cameron stands a sad representative. The story—at least a truthful picture of a misspent life—has not been set about hastily, or with the intention of producing a sensation work. It is a story full of shadow, the evil side largely predominant, and yet the elements of good putting forth a feeble shoot or two, even in the dark estate to

which neglect and ignorance had reduced Jane Cameron.

For much that will appear in these pages, it is needless to say that I have had but this woman's word; although, from past knowledge of her character, I do not hesitate to assert my own belief in the authenticity of her narrative. Jane Cameron (or rather the woman whom I designate by that name throughout these pages) was at least one whose word could be trusted, and who had no motive to exaggerate her statements. Her story, as related in a fragmentary fashion, let me hasten to add, has not been followed in its entirety. Here and there details have been slightly modified and abridged; and for the purpose of disguising the identity of my guilty "heroine," and of certain prison characters connected with her, I have not scrupled to change the scene of action, or alter entirely the nature of those sentences which it was her lot to receive from the laws of her country. This excepted, I claim the story to be considered as a true relation of a criminal career—a story that makes no attempt to render

"things pleasant," but, with a useful purpose ever in view, unsparingly exhibits the truth, and aims to be a faithful chronicle of a woman's fall and rescue.

I may add that I have sought, in every instance, and wherever practicable, to compare notes with those who were personally acquainted with Jane Cameron; to visit, or in some instances cause to be visited, those places wherein her early days were spent, those haunts of vice still extant, and where lives similar to Cameron's are beginning in the same way, to end after the same awful fashion. During the progress of this work I shall allude to many well-known "Guilt Gardens." There will always be one satisfaction connected with the writing of this book, that I shall have directed attention anew to the one gigantic evil, which it is possible by a united effort of good men to ameliorate—the evil of NEGLECT.

I have been assisted in my search for truth by the principal public functionaries of Edinburgh and Glasgow, gentlemen who, partly ignorant of the object which took me and a valuable co-operator to Scotland, were yet most

anxious, by every means in their power, to show me the interior of their prisons, the working of their criminal law, the darkest secrets of their streets. From all sides and from all parties I have experienced the greatest kindness ; and I am anxious to testify, in this place, to the courtesy and attention which have rendered me ever a debtor to the North. From the members of prison boards, prison governors, chief constables and superintendents, to the active detective officer and his attendant constable, I have been met with that desire to afford me the fullest information, which has enabled me to track, almost step by step, the early progress—that sad progress ever downwards—of her whose life I now attempt to write. To the Honorary Secretary of the Prisoner's Aid Society, also to the Secretary of that admirable institution, I desire to tender my hearty thanks ; and I must not forget those good Christians and kind friends who have helped to throw a light upon the after and better life of Cameron.

The reader will perceive that I have spared no pains to make these memoirs truthful. They

are sad memoirs enough, relieved only in the latter portion by a gleam or two of brightness.

I believe I offer for the first time an authentic record of a female criminal's career—that tracing it, and even attempting the analysis of it, step by step, I offer to those more learned and more powerful than I, a clue to the mystery of temptation, and demonstrate to those philanthropists, whose numbers are not few, where the first effort should be made to turn the weak and erring from the danger. Much of goodly effort has been wasted through not beginning at the proper time, or in the proper place. If the story offer a picture of how the poor and ignorant are led to crime, and are in innumerable instances taught to regard it as simply a business, the evil nature of which is, to them, not apparent, the vantage ground on which to work and pray may be rendered more secure. In a great degree it is a Scotch story, but for the difference in the nature of the temptation, or in the causes which lead a human being on the downward road, it might be a story of our own city, and of our helpless castaways. The same reasons which

brought Jane Cameron to ruin in the streets of Glasgow have brought many hundreds to the same sad end in Whitechapel and Drury Lane. There is not much variation to the rule which governs those shut out from the teaching of God's Word, and keeps the unenlightened soul for ever in the darkness.

It is the life of one neglected from the cradle-side—a life not devoid of interest, I hope, and the plain recital of which may lead the way, God willing, to an earnest effort, here and there, to counsel, help, and SAVE!

CHAPTER II.

CROILEY'S LAND.

I PRESUME that there are many of my readers acquainted with the city of Glasgow—the third city in extent and importance in the United Kingdom.

A great city wherein much money is made, where the evidence of wealth is visible, where trade flourishes and its citizens die millionaires. Like London, or Liverpool, or any city covering its miles of ground, a city of extremes—possessing, I dare to affirm, after much study of its character, more utter poverty, more abject wretchedness and ignorance hidden in its wynds and closes, than are to be discovered in a lifelong search throughout the London streets. As I

believe that some of the richest men, possibly the richest men in the world, are to be found in Glasgow, so is my conviction that there is no poverty so thoroughly repellent and demonstrative as the poverty that has its dwelling-place in this great Scotch mart of commerce.

It is a repellent poverty, in many instances, by its love of drink—its "whiskey-greed;" for although temperance has made some strides in this quarter, yet whiskey-shops are still flourishing institutions, and Saturday night in High Street or the Salt-market is like no other Saturday night in any city in the world. It is demonstrative by its numbers, who in the depths of winter emerge bare-footed and half-clad from the narrow turnings in the old portions of the town, and shiver their way along the streets.

Years ago there stood—as there stands now—at a short distance from the High Street, a nest of tall gaunt houses cramped together, of some three or four stories high, each room of which was occupied by one or more proprietors, and in Scotch parlance called "a house." A densely populated place, bearing the worst name in Glas-

gow, and deserving it, was Croiley's Land in the New Vennel.

Turning over old papers and documents concerning Glasgow, I find therein constant reference to Croiley's Land, otherwise Croyley's, occasionally Croley and Criley's Crescent. To the police, the place is the Crescent or the Vennel. Twenty or thirty years ago, thieves and worse than thieves, were being searched for in this neighbourhood; at the present hour, in all human probability, they are still being anxiously inquired for there.

Croiley's Land was a place where honest poverty seldom troubled itself to seek refuge—more especially that poverty which was proud of its good name, and careful who its neighbours were. From Croiley's Land stole forth at night the thieves and prostitutes who made night hideous—into Croiley's Land were decoyed the dupes and dragged the resisting, and dark work was done there after sun-down. All the crimes which shock humanity have had existence there—are still existing. "The worst place in the world," was the designation given to it by an experienced detective, who at the writer's request conducted a

valued friend through all the tortuous windings, from floor to floor, and room to room, of that sin-haunted labyrinth.

Robbery with violence still occurs too frequently in the New Vennel to call for any especial remark: the most desperate of a desperate class are caught here, or in the adjacent closes; despairing poverty, or despairing crime—it is difficult at times to make the distinction—has ended its existence by its own hand in these rooms, or on the common stair, dark and filthy, leading up thereto, or hanged itself by the railings which fence in some higher ground at the back. Murder has been committed here under circumstances of an awful character—the window of a top room opened in the night, and a drugged victim hurled into the yard below. The successful crime that has been committed in the New Vennel far exceeds in amount that which has been brought to the judgment of human law. Ten or eleven years since, it was estimated that the average number of robberies, in *one room alone* of this densely populated quarter, was twelve a week —robberies which were known to have occurred,

but which had not been reported at the police office, the victims having put up quietly with their losses in preference to the publicity of their names. Concerning crimes of this character, I shall have to dwell more fully in future pages of this work.

The entrance to Croiley's Land is by a narrow turning out of High Street; the entrance to the Crescent by a doorless stair—common to all low residences in Scotch towns and cities. One must plunge into this place as into a wild beast's den, and grope in the darkness upwards, if he has business here, or be a "middleman" after the week's rent, or a doctor visiting some patient stricken down by typhus. The stairs are damp and clammy to the tread, and the unwholesome air greets a visitor pestilentially on entrance. On each floor are four or five doors opening into as many rooms, eight feet in length by six or seven feet in width; in each of these rooms men, women, and children, from four or five in number to *ten or twelve*, eat, drink, sleep, and live. Thieves flock together in numbers unpleasantly large, and if a poor but honest creature be driven hither by

stern necessity, she must take in lodgers to help the rent a "wee bit." The rents of these rooms are about fifteen pence a week—lower or higher according to circumstances—and in every hole and corner of the place foul disease is lurking.

Houses of this character are neither few nor far between in Glasgow. The closes are still numerous in the High Street, the Salt-market, and the Bridgegate, although the Lord Dean of Guild has made short work with many pronounced dangerous and uninhabitable.* Those that are left have become more crowded and require stricter supervision than it is possible to obtain for them—landlords evading repairs and alterations as often as convenient, occasionally even giving up the property altogether rather than put themselves to the expense of keeping it fairly habitable. The Procurator-Fiscal does his work well, but it is a task beyond his power, whilst the landlord lets and sublets to speculative agents or middlemen who care for nothing so that the rent is safe. These

* In 1849, owing to the taking down of houses in the Old Wynd, 1,500 of the lower classes migrated to the New Vennel and Burnside, near the Glasgow University.

closes, vennels, wynds, are all well-paying property on the whole, although the rent-collecting is objectionable, and at times a trifle dangerous.

Round about the New Vennel are many similar haunts of sin and shame—the Havannah Burnside, the Old Wynd, the Old Vennel, the Tontine Close, &c.; but the worst of all is the New Vennel, as it also *was* when Jane Cameron was born therein.

CHAPTER III.

CHILDHOOD.

THE woman whom I shall call Jane Cameron throughout these pages was born, then, in Croiley's Land, in the New Vennel, Glasgow. In no instance do I mention dates herein. To the best of my ability, and consistent with the truth of my narrative, I have endeavoured to render the subject of my tale somewhat difficult to guess at. I may add that she was born in the winter, when the cold in Glasgow streets was hard to fight against; born on a litter of shavings, in a corner of a room on the third floor in the famous—or rather infamous—Crescent.

Her mother was the daughter of a poor Lanarkshire weaver; she was accustomed to

state as much at times, although no friends from old Lanark ever troubled the Vennel, or letters were received thence. Jane's reputed father was a man whose trade was difficult to guess at, who disappeared for weeks and months together, and turned up again—a brutal, morose, drunken vagabond, whom Mrs. Cameron loved after a fashion, and of whom she was jealous after a wild beast fashion also.

When Jane Cameron was born, the mother had lost all claim to "good looks." She had had three children, two of whom had died of the fever always lurking in these haunts; she had been ever ill-treated by her "mate" who took her money when she had any, and struck her when she had not; although a woman lost to all sense of decency, and dead to all religion, she was faithful to him. Jenny Cameron's "*Cush*" was the elegant sobriquet bestowed upon this ruffian —the cant Scotch name for all men whom these mistaught, misguided creatures of our sex cling to, struggle for, and even love.

Jane Cameron's mother was not a professional thief; she was a woman well known to the police,

but a woman against whom the police had not made many charges during her residence in Glasgow—only one for keeping a disorderly house in Factory Land—an infamous haunt, similar to the New Vennel, but now pulled down—and the remainder for being drunk in the streets, and abusive to the general public. Whiskey-drinking was the reigning fault of Mrs. Cameron; every Saturday night she was quarrelsome and abusive to her lodgers—she took in lodgers in that room eight feet by seven—every Saturday night, if she were not particularly watchful, she was borne away to the central police court, and fined on the Monday morning by the bailie, supposing her conduct had been flagrant enough to warrant her appearance before him.

How Mrs. Cameron earned sufficient money to keep herself and daughter, pay fifteen pence a-week for rent, indulge herself whenever there was an opportunity with her favourite whiskey-drinking, even defray her fines for being drunk and disorderly, rather than submit herself to the inconvenience of being locked up for ten days in Glasgow Gaol, is one of those apparent mysteries

common to the lives of a hundred Mrs. Camerons living in Glasgow at the present moment.

And yet upon studying the question the problem is not difficult of solution. Lodging-houses, however disreputable, pay a fair amount of dividend; men and women, boys and girls, outcasts from society who are under suspicion, pay twopence and three-pence a-night each, for the privilege of lying down on a heap of shavings strewn about the floor—numbers not objected to, so that they remain pretty quiet, and let other people sleep. A good fire is kept up in the winter time. Coals are cheap in Glasgow, and a fire that burns well and shows a fair light does not cost a great deal: the woman who bears a reputation for not being stingy with her fire, is never short of lodgers.

In the New Vennel, then, were passed the early days of Jane Cameron. In the midst of penury and vice, without one example to afford her a chance of thinking there was anything better or purer in the world than her mother, her associates, and her lodgers, the first five years of her life were spent. At five years of age she was as precocious as most girls of her class. Her knowledge was

self-acquired, but it was an awful knowledge of the world's wickedness, at which there was nothing to shudder—it was all in the natural course of things—what happened in the New Vennel every day! Her mother, she has assured me, never exhibited one instance of affection for her in her childhood, treated her as an incumbrance not to be conveniently got rid of; a something to be always hanging about, half-dressed, half-starved, and wholly untaught—a thing to be struck at for being in the way, for not growing up faster, and becoming of use to her mother, for coming home too early from the streets, into which she was driven, and *coming home hungry.*

"You should beg of the well-dressed," was the one injunction ever impressed upon Jane Camerod; "at your age—a great girl sic as ye—ye should be able to keep yersel."

This injunction at five years of age, and then turned out bare-legged and scantily clad, in all weathers and at all hours of the day and night, to shift for herself. Now and then it happened that she was borrowed for the day by those im-

postors who haunt every large city, and made to form one of a train, to parade the streets as a member of an honest family turned out of doors to beg for bread; but more often she begged for herself, and brought her earnings to her mother, who was always suspecting her of keeping back some money—"thieving it away from her!"

In one respect at least, Jane Cameron had a moral superiority over many of her contemporaries—she was not trained up as a professional thief; her mother, in fact, was rather proud of being considered an honest woman, a woman who had never been in prison for a criminal offence. Mrs. Cameron knew every thief in Glasgow; let lodgings to them, shut her eyes at robberies committed in her room or "house," took a percentage upon the robber's earnings, and helped to screen the robber, or swear falsely for him in the police court, if occasion necessitated it; but she was an honest creature, who scorned the name of thief, and who at least did not bring up *her* child as other children were brought up in the Vennel!

She wholly and utterly neglected her—that was all. Jane Cameron was the victim of neglect; no

one cared or thought of her in any way save as an incumbrance. The mother neglected her, the world neglected her!

And are ignorance and bad society more responsible for all the evil in the world than the neglect which is the precursor of all this? Neglect the poor and ignorant and they will go bad; neglect, above all, their dwelling-places and let them live, herd together, and die like dogs—as they live and die in every city throughout the kingdom in a more or less degree—and we need not wonder at the increase of crime. Society may have done much, but it has not done half enough yet, or proceeded always the right way to work.

Ask ninety-nine out of a hundred convicts how they were brought up, and you will find that their early career was in the midst of crowded and unwholesome dens, where common decency was entirely unknown. Whilst they live thus, whilst they evade the law by herding together thus, whilst their homes are of that awful character that a prison cell is better furnished and in most cases *larger*, it is but little avail even to track them to their haunts and strive to preach them into goodness.

Some of them will listen, be even touched by the earnest efforts of persevering men of God, but they are only a few, and the impression cannot last—is almost impossible under the circumstances to last. The door closes on God's minister, and temptation enters again; the whiskey-bottle is nigh: the bad companions are flocking in: there is no help for them, no chance of thinking about a new life, no room to escape to, and all is forgotten or laughed at. There can be but little reformation hoped for in houses of this character. Make homes clean and decent, sweep away such places as the New Vennel and the Havannah in Glasgow, as the courts in Kent Street and Drury Lane, render the law more serviceable to keep houses healthy and free from overcrowding, erect cheap houses that the poor can rent, and then there will be a time and place to listen to the minister, and the good will be increased tenfold in proportion.

Jane Cameron's mother kept a lodging-house, be it understood then, and Jane Cameron was a child very much in the way. She was hungry at unseasonable times; she had to wear some kind of clothing—

a frock at least—and she took up space at night, unless she was turned out on the common stair to make room for people with money in their pockets. The common stair was to be preferred in the summer time: many wanderers brought their shavings, their rags, their mattresses—the possessors of these last desiderata were the well-to-do folk in the New Vennel—on to the landing-place, to escape the suffocating room, and the *insects* that encrusted the walls and floors, and were eating away the very place!

Being turned out on the common stair in the winter time for late arrivals to tread upon or kick aside with an oath, for the police, always on the alert and in search of some one, to stumble over and remonstrate with, and insist upon the mother taking her indoors again—to be turned out again when the officials' backs were turned—was nearly salvation to Jane Cameron, although the fact never suggested itself to her till long afterwards.

In the New Vennel there lodged at that period one honest couple—only one honest pair—working hard and struggling for a subsistence in the midst

of the crime that was seething round them. This couple consisted of a mat-maker and his wife, renting a room on the same floor as the Camerons —a couple who worked late at night and early in the morning at the mats which they hawked all day about the Glasgow streets.

Had this couple been a religious pair as well as honest and hard-working, Jane Cameron might have been taught better things, received her first lessons in the way to walk uprightly. But they were simply kind-hearted folk, struggling hard for a living, people who were laughed at, and became at times the victims of practical jokes from their contemporaries—people who worked at all times and seasons, and gave themselves no rest—not even on Sundays, when there were idleness and feasting in the Vennel. They were always at work; the man was a water-drinker, a hard-featured Scotchman with strange ideas on religious subjects, and the woman was a pale-faced, anxious-looking creature, whose ideas had been confounded and perverted by her helpmate.

I have only to say that they were kind to Jenny, and gave her, even at seven years of age,

advice by which she might have profited—that is a great deal to say in favour of the inmates of the Vennel. They arrived at the New Vennel when Jenny was about seven years of age; they had been previously living, or trying to live, in Perth, but had come to Glasgow for a change.

Macvee and his wife—such are the *real names* given me by my informant—were the first to notice the girl huddled on the dark staircase, up which the wintry blast was rushing fiercely. The mother's "house" was over-full one particular night, and every inch of flooring was covered by sleepers—there was no room for Jane.

Macvee had come home late with his mats and fallen over the child sleeping in the fashion to which she had become accustomed.

"Who are ye?" he asked roughly.

"Jennie Cameron."

"What are ye sleeping on the stair for?"

"Na room in mither's hoose to-nicht."

"Come in by the fire here."

He was a man of few words, always rough in his manners and abrupt in his speech, but a man who felt for this little outcast. He took her

into his room, and she sat up that night by the fire, and watched the mat-making. The process was new to her, the quiet steady persistence at the work amused her, till the warmth of the room drew her off to sleep. When she woke up at a late hour, man and wife were still hard at work; when she hazarded a remark, the man, annoyed at being interrupted, growled at her for speaking to him. In the early morning they shut her out on the stair again—they were too poor to afford her anything to eat.

Jane Cameron was accustomed to look in upon the mat-maker every evening after this; to prefer the mat-maker's home, and the quietness that pervaded it, to the reckless life, the drunkenness and vice, of her mother's "house-place." Mrs. Cameron made no remark upon her daughter's tastes; she was perfectly indifferent to her whereabouts; if Jane had been away for a month together—if she had disappeared for ever—the unnatural mother would not have grieved for her.

"I think she alwa' hated me, Miss," was Jane Cameron's verdict on her mother. "Hated me

for being born. I hate mysel for that sometimes," was once her bitter assertion.

Macvee and his wife used occasionally to talk of Jane, and Jane's family, and deplore the child's position before her. Macvee would become excited at times, and speak of the shame it was that there was no one to think of the girl, or to keep her from running wild, or take her away from such an awful place as the New Vennel, discoursing volubly, and brandishing the knife with which he worked over his head. To Jane herself he seldom addressed a word, but the wife was more conversational, and so naturally more of a favourite. All the winter, the door of Macvee's house was never shut in the child's face; she became accustomed to knock there every night when turned out of doors, and her mother, a keen woman of business, took to shutting her out with a regularity to which Jane had been never before accustomed.

Jane remembers a desperate quarrel between Mrs. Macvee and her mother concerning herself —Mrs. Macvee remonstrating with Mrs. Cameron

on her want of motherly feeling; and Mrs. Cameron flying at the former, striking her in the face, and tearing her cap from her head.

"I was afeard that they wudna' hae me any mair," Jane said, when dwelling on this far-off reminiscence of her life: "but when I knocked as usual they let me in, and I took my place agin the fire, without a wry word being flung at me."

Mrs. Macvee even ventured on further advice to Jane—sound and profitable advice to keep strong and not be led away by the girls in the closes thereabouts, and to seek the first opportunity to get away from the Vennel, and find a place as servant, anywhere, at any price.

"Ye 'll be better awa'" she was always remarking; "if ye can ony find a friend. Alwa' be lookin' oot for a friend, Jennie."

And Jenny never found a friend—a true friend to teach her right, and keep her strong—in the world which she began early, and in which she aged so rapidly.

Her one resemblance to a friend met with misfortune; mats fell to a discount, and there were few purchasers in Glasgow. The middle-

man, the man who rents such places as the Vennel of their proprietors, seized suddenly for three weeks' rent and carried away the mats; the mat-maker and his wife were turned suddenly into the streets, and disappeared—probably from Glasgow, for Jane Cameron never saw them again.

CHAPTER IV.

A DANCING SCHOOL.

LITTLE transpired to interest a general reader in Jane Cameron's life between the age of seven and ten years old. At ten she was three years worse as well as three years older—with a knowledge of life that would have disgraced most women.

She had been reared in a rough school, and its lesson had made her keen and crafty; she was considered a quick girl, and her ready answers to her mother's lodgers rendered her a favourite with those who patronized Mrs. Cameron's establishment. She had obtained a place in a cotton factory by this time, and earned a shilling or two a week, which were greedily seized on

the Saturday night, and very often expended in whiskey, when a "drop of drink" had rendered the mother careless of money matters. Jane Cameron saw but little of her putative father; this was a great comfort to her, the man being devoid of all parental feeling, and hating his daughter with an intensity that was remarkable even with such characters as his. He had never been kind to Mrs. Cameron, but to the daughter he was worse than unkind—he was a villain dead to every sense of human feeling. When Jenny was ten years of age, he told her with terrible plainness what was the best manner of living, young as she was; how it was possible to benefit the family by an easier method than working at a factory. This unnatural villain did not tempt the daughter, but mingled his counsel with fierce oaths, and threatened to turn her out of doors if she did not earn more money presently. To give the mother a certain amount of credit, it may be said here that this evil counsel was never proffered by her to her daughter; once she even ventured to remark to the man that there was no good putting such thoughts

n the girl's head, and received a liberal allowance of vituperation for her uncalled-for interference. All this, I am conscious, is very awful to relate. It chills one to write as well as read; but this is a true story, and, alas! Jane Cameron's life is not an exceptional one.

The same career opens in the same way for many an unfortunate, and they who have no fear of God's laws, or care for God's mercy, are never slow to attempt the debasement of those by whom they are surrounded. It is an old, old story, varied a little in the nature of its incidents, but it is a story which is being told every day, and it always ends, at an earlier or later period, like a tragedy.

Jane Cameron found no consolation in her mother's house, met with no affection to render even that place a something which bore a shadowy resemblance to home, and so found her comfort and her companions in the streets. She was at an age when the streets have a powerful attraction for girls who have worked hard all day. In the streets were light and life, companions of her own age and sex, factory

girls, daughters of poor people, honest and dishonest, who lived in the Havannah, Burnside, and the High Street closes.

This was the second step downwards—a poor girl with a love for the streets, the companions to be found there, and the amusements which spring thence—with a hatred of home and all belonging to it. I think we have a right to pity her rather than condemn her; she had never known right; no good example—unless we call the mat-maker's patient industry an example—had been offered her; she knew nothing of God—she had only heard His name coupled with frightful imprecations upon passing things and friends—no one had attempted to educate her—the world had been harsh and unkind at every step she made, and there was no sense of doing wrong when the wrong came in due course by the terrible rule governing lives like hers. Think of this, philanthropists, and keep at work in the good cause—remember the poor children of poor mothers, drifting into sin by the same course as Jane Cameron's, and strive ever against the barriers with which the Father of all Evil is hemming them in.

Jane Cameron made her one friend, and her worst friend, at this juncture. At the cotton-mill she formed the acquaintance of a child some twelve months her senior in years, and far older than herself in knowledge of the world; a girl whose character for boldness and low cunning was already fairly established in Glasgow city—the daughter of disreputable parents living down one of the High Street closes.

This girl, Mary Loggie, constituted herself Jane Cameron's friend. Together they wandered about High Street and the Salt-market after the work was over for the day at the cotton-mill, making many street acquaintances, boys and girls of their own age and their own character, who had no inducement to remain at home, and were of the usual bold neglected class which haunts all streets at night.

Their amusements were of no particular description, and arose chiefly from the passing incidents of the hour. They collected in groups at street corners, and talked, laughed, romped, and quarrelled noisily, till the policemen dispersed them. They were scarcely children; there was no

innocence of childhood in their midst; oaths were as familiar to them as to the people with whom they were living. With them there was that frightful oldness of thought characteristic of neglected children; they were little men and women, proud of their evil knowledge, and seeking every opportunity to display it.

They were deplorably ignorant; half of them were already practised thieves; half of them at least had been in prison for petty thefts, and took no small credit to themselves for the exploits which had conducted them thither. Jane Cameron had not been tempted to steal her neighbours' goods yet, but the evil nature of the act was not apparent to her. Already she considered it in the light of a profession, to which she might turn when other means more honest failed her; she had a fear of the prison and the police at that time, and there was a natural objection to being locked up, which kept her for a little while longer an honest girl.

But the example was too often before her; her companions were bad and bold; her bosom-friend, Mary Loggie, even acknowledged to her that she

had served her ten days in Glasgow Prison, for stealing from a baker's shop.

"Prison 's naethin," was Mary Loggie's account; "they take care of ye, an gie ye eno to eat—more than ye get at hame. There 's naethin to frighten ye a bit!"

When the nights were wet, Jane Cameron went to her friend's home in the High Street close—a house considerably larger than her mother's—quite a first-class lodging-house, where the beds were let out at as high a rent as sixpence a-night.

The Loggies, father and mother, rented two rooms on the first floor in the close; the first room, into which the second opened, being of large dimensions, and furnished with bedsteads, and with extempore shelves under the bedsteads for inferior customers, who did not care for too much breathing room over-head. The Loggies were well off in their way; had a goodly show of crockery on a dresser by the side of the fireplace, and were patronized by every bad character who had money to spend.

The Loggies were people to be trusted by the

"profession." Slow-going and quiet-looking, very civil to the police, and apparently very anxious to afford that inquiring body every information; but people who held fast to their customers, and speculated in stolen property, or took care of it for awhile—who even kept a shebeen * on the sly, and brought out whiskey for sale when there was a choice company assembled, that might be trusted. Loggie's house was well known to the police as a bad house in every sense of the word, although Loggie himself had never got into trouble.

Such houses are, to a certain extent, I fear, necessary evils; they are common centres, to which are attracted the vile of all classes, where the evil-doers are more easily discovered, and borne away, to be shut from further harm to the society whose laws they have outraged.

To this house Mary Loggie took our unhappy heroine once or twice a week. There was plenty of company there till eleven at night. If the rain were falling heavily without, boys and girls, men and women, trooped in, gathered round the fire,

* Unlicensed drinking-house.

and smoked, drank whiskey, sang songs, and told tales of a questionable character. Upon a wet night Loggie's house was full of customers, and Jane Cameron used to sit and watch them, thinking how comfortable they were, and how hard it was that the police were always interfering with them.

The Loggies were the happiest or the most reckless of them all; they were a crew who were at least kind to Jane, and kindness always stood for goodness with this child. They were a large family; besides the host and hostess of this select establishment, there were two grown-up daughters, leading a life of profligacy, and encouraged in it by their parents; and a like number of grown-up sons, who were considered at that time two of the cleverest thieves in Glasgow, for they were clever enough not to be caught very often. They were all kind to Jane, and anxious to show her life—they were building upon her being *one of them*, presently!

Jane preferred the Loggies to her mother; she returned at all hours of the night to her own home, and was asked no questions. She was left

to go her own way without a remonstrance, and from the Loggies' "house" to her mother's was passing but from one den of infamy to another.

She had already begun to evince a distaste for the long hours and hard work at the cotton-mill. Mary Loggie was far from regular in her attendance there, and had more time to spend in the streets with street companions; and Mrs. Cameron was only strict to her daughter so far as related to her work, which brought in a little more money for the drink, to which she was partial. Once when Jane was returning home to dinner, a lady, struck with her destitute appearance, gave her a fourpenny piece, which Jane saved for the evening to spend with her friends. That evening she and Mary Loggie went to a "dancing school," in one of the closes—a place they had frequented once or twice before—and danced with the boys till ten at night.

There was a strong attraction in this cheap dancing room: it was real life—there were music, company, a mad whirl of spirits, and the hours sped by with a rapidity scarcely to be accounted for. What if it were dancing on the

brink of the abyss where ruin lay in wait for her —what did she know of moral ruin and disgrace, or care about them?

She was happy in this place—it was a relief after factory hours. Half the girls of her age—younger, some of them—rushed with the pennies they could beg, borrow, or steal, to this haunt, and danced the hours away.

These penny dancing rooms or "skeels," as the Scotch call them, had, I believe, their origin in Liverpool. Their success amongst the lower orders led to their institution in the Old Town of Edinburgh, thence from Edinburgh to Glasgow.

They have been successful to their proprietors; they have been "successful" as nurseries of crime. Half the Scotchwomen whom I have known as female convicts trace their ruin to these "skeels."

"I was led awa to gae there first, an' then I thought o' naethin else. There was no tearin' mysel awa' from them, when I was a young lassie!"

Jane Cameron and her friend Mary Loggie visited this dancing school very frequently. In the arrangement of these places, in the manner in

which they are conducted, there is nothing particularly objectionable; it is the massing together the weak and ignorant with the criminal and designing, the encouragement of children of all ages to assemble in these dens, which work such inevitable mischief.

Entrance to these dancing "skeels" is generally by an unlighted close, up a common stair to a large room on the first floor. The door of this room—on which "DANCING HERE" is legibly inscribed—is kept by a scowling individual—probably the proprietor of the establishment—who receives the pennies of his young patrons, unlocks the door, admits them, and locks them in.

In this room, lighted by gas or candles according to the taste or means of the proprietors, a hundred or a hundred and fifty are speedily assembled—ranged around the room on forms placed against the wall. They are of all ages, from the boy and girl of seven or eight years old to the men and women of two or three and twenty, but the majority are girls and boys averaging from twelve to fifteen years. The boys are chiefly apprentices or young thieves; the girls are of the usual poor

class—more than usually poor perhaps—three fourths of them without shoes and stockings, and all of them bonnetless, as is usual amongst the Scotch girls. The boys are several degrees removed from clean, but the "lassies," as they are generally termed, are, without an exception, bright-faced, glossy-haired damsels, who have evidently been at no ordinary pains to render themselves attractive and presentable. Here and there is evident a little effort at finery in the shape of a pair of ear-rings, or a necklace of sham coral, and their poor and scanty garments are in many cases destitute of any signs of raggedness.

The master of the ceremonies, carrying a fiddle or kit under his arm—occasionally bag-pipes are substituted for the violin—calls out the dance: in all cases a Scotch dance of the simplest character is chosen; the dancers are arranged, music is struck up, and the festivity begins with a hideous clatter of thick soles and heels from the masculine portion, and a soft pattering of naked feet from the majority of the feminine. There is much setting to partners, and an infinitude of solo performances, winding up with the usual twirling and

twisting common to Scotch dances in general; and in the midst of all this heat and dust and bustle, the man sits perched above his scholars, fiddling rapidly, and glaring at them like the evil genius of the place.

They are all known to him—every face is familiar. To the elder girls, who may have encouraged strangers there, he is friendly and fatherly and watchful; he knows that before the evening is out the strangers will probably be robbed, and there will be an uproar, and it may be necessary for some kind friend to turn the gas out or knock the candles over, and leave the entire company to grope their way down the common stair into the close—or the man at the door, who is a prize-fighter by profession, will be called in to keep order, silence the remonstrants or turn them out of the room. As a rule, the proprietor objects to robbery in the "skeel" itself, and has a room on the other side of the landing where such things may be conducted with greater ease and save the "skeel" from falling into disrepute. Night after night, in these Scotch cities, still goes on this hideous revelry; still are attracted girls and boys from

their homes, still are engulphed the heedless youth of both sexes. Many innocent children of poor, even respectable parents are lured hither to imbibe a love for dancing and bad company. The apprentice robs to get here, the girl begs in the street, or thieves her way to admittance; step by step to ruin surely and swiftly proceed these untaught, uncared-for children, and they are past hope, and have left all childhood behind them, at an age that is horrible to dwell upon.

Let us urge here the great importance of sweeping away these nurseries of crime at once. They are on the increase, and are working greater mischief daily. Surely there must be a law to expunge them from our cities; they must be evading the law by their very presence in our midst. There is no difficulty in finding them; they are well known to every police officer: the evil that they do is incalculable.

In Glasgow at the present moment, within a stone's throw of each other, are two of these vile places of amusement—there are more of them, I have reason to believe—which cannot be too suddenly and wholly rooted out. They are called

the "Nurseries" by the police—fitting nurseries of all that is vicious and depraved, where modesty exists not, and vice is triumphant. Looking in upon them, there is no more occasion to wonder why the efforts of good men are nugatory, crime still increases and prisons are always full, when this sad beginning of many hundred lives is existent and is tolerated. Vice begins before the preacher or the reformer, and it has obtained a terrible distance ahead before God's words fall upon the hardened conscience. No one speaks of God, or bids the weak be strong to resist temptation in the dancing skeels in *Buchanan Court* and the *Lay Kirk Close.*

Jane Cameron was not twelve years of age when she had her first sweetheart, a boy of fourteen whom she had met at the "skeel;" a boy who had run away from his apprenticeship, was connected with a gang of thieves, and, naturally, a thief himself. Jane was not afraid of thieves; she had met them too often at the "skeel," she had been too often in their society at her mother's house and Loggie's; they were good-tempered, most of them, free with their money,

and very often with plenty of money to spend. The lad whom I will call Ewan "took a fancy," as Jane always termed it, to this child—constituted her his girl sweetheart, and turned Jane's head on the instant. Mary Loggie, wholly bad, and anxious to see Jane as bad as herself, encouraged the connection; Jane cared no more for work at the factory, but became, in a wild passionate way, strange enough for her years, it may seem to the general reader, attached to this youth, who had already been three times in Glasgow Gaol and once in Edinburgh.

Jane Cameron, assorting with this lad, and evincing in somewhat of a demonstrative manner her affection for him, became an object of suspicion herself. The police were distrustful of her: they were men of the world who understood human nature, and could guess easily enough how the story would end. One kind-hearted detective, accustomed to look in at these dancing-schools, took the trouble to warn Jane of the way she was drifting.

"You'll ne'er do any gude in this place, or wi' that lad, Jennie Cameron—take care of yoursel."

Jane took no heed of the warning—she was past warning then. She had not committed a theft, but the opportunity had not fallen in her way. The temptation had not come yet: there would be no moral restraint to keep her hands from other men's goods, when the hour was before her in which to choose for good or for evil. She was not twelve years of age when she thought herself a woman, old enough to consider this lad her lover, one for whom she would go through fire or water, were the occasion necessary—to stand by in the face of all opposition from the mother in the New Vennel.

So far the innocent life of Jane Cameron—if it can be called innocence to live after her fashion, and form companions like hers. Let us turn to darker shadings, and standing on the upper ground which by God's goodness is ours, watch, not unpitifully, the first plunge of this benighted soul to ruin.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST THEFT.

It was a custom of Mrs. Cameron's—persisted in up to the period of which we treat—to search her daughter's pockets every morning before sending her off to the cotton-mill. Mrs. Cameron was always suspicious of her daughter possessing money; it might have been given her by charitable people in the streets, or Jane might have become possessed of it from the lodgers, or from herself, if too many "wee draps" had been indulged in over night; and, at all events, it was as well to make sure before the day's duties were commenced. As Jane grew older, this process began to cause her no small vexation and disquietude—more especially as Ewan gave her

money at times, sometimes as much as sixpence or a shilling, when he had been "in luck's way"—and it became imperative to spend that sum immediately upon its receipt, or hide it in some hole or corner of the close where the possibility existed of its escaping her mother's vigilance.

Jane Cameron, as a rule, left home penniless, and it was Mary Loggie's money that generally took them both to the dancing-room. Mary became unlucky also about this time; in fact, business was bad amongst the Glasgow thieves, and there were general complaints. Shopkeepers had become extra vigilant, "the profession" was not doing well, the Loggies were grieving at the slackness of trade, and there was no one of whom to borrow money. John Ewan was a careful, even a crafty lad in his way; his whereabouts was not accurately known to Jane Cameron; he had a habit of flitting from place to place and changing his lodgings as often as convenient. He was mostly to be met with at the "skeel," however; he was a good Scotch dancer for a boy, and extremely vain of his saltatory accomplishments. That was John Ewan's reigning weakness—vanity.

He considered himself one of the cleverest boy thieves in Glasgow, and those who flattered him and speculated in him encouraged this delusion, and called him "Cannie Jock," a name which clung to Ewan all his life.

Jane was about twelve years of age when this general slackness of trade reduced "Cannie Jock" to extremities. Luck had been against him for some time; he had long since abjured work, and would have possibly found it difficult to obtain it, had he been so inclined; he was in debt to his landlady, and there was no money in his pockets. The winter nights, for which he was praying, were coming on fast; it was close on November, and there would be better chances soon, but whilst he waited and prowled about the streets, he was verging on starvation. Still, starving and ragged as this boy was, he found his way twice and thrice a week to the dancing "skeels," where Jenny followed him, when the chance presented itself.

Jealousy in this girl—so young to be jealous!—was the cause of the first evil step. Mary Loggie and she were both penniless one Saturday evening

in the end of October—were both wandering listlessly up and down the Salt-market—when they were met by one of their usual companions.

"Are ye ganging to the skeel to-nicht, Jennie?" was the inquiry.

"Na money," was the sententious response.

"Jock Ewan's plenty o' money to-nicht; he hae gane in wi' the Frazer lassies. He's tired o' ye, Jennie—ye're too young for him." Cameron remembers firing up at this—feeling beside herself with jealousy and indignation. The Frazer girls were of the old bad class, rife in the vennels, closes, and wynds—juvenile in appearance, but old in thought—thieves, and worse. "Cannie Jock's" attentions to Jane Cameron—a tall girl for her age, and a handsome girl too, at that time—had long been an object of envy to Jane's contemporaries, Jock being a character in Glasgow whose attention was worth courting, and a lad free with his money when he had it to spend. Cameron was a passionate girl, and easily disturbed in temper—consequently a fitting object for practical joking when the occasion presented itself.

Still they did not intend joking that particular evening. Master Ewan had really treated the Frazer girls to the "skeel" that night, and neglected Jennie Cameron for the new faces, as it appeared.

Jane and her friend went at once to the "skeel" and pressed urgently for admittance, promising faithfully to pay at some future opportunity. But the proprietor held the door fast, and was inflexible as Cerberus. Times had been hard with him too; he had trusted several of his regular customers, and they had never shown their faces to him since—he would have his penny, or they might "gang awa'" downstairs again.

Jane was desperate that night, and went into High Street again like a young lioness, followed by the breathless Mary Loggie, from whom she had run away.

"I must get into the skeel to-nicht," said Jane. "I must see him, and tell him what I think o' him. Why didn't he tell me at ance that he had grown tired o' me, and wanted to be on wi' those Frazers?"

"Ah! it's like him, Jane," was the answer. "I

alwa' told ye to hae nothing to do wi' him — that he war a false loon."

"I must get to the skeel," Jane reiterated; "I dinna care how now."

Jane bade Mary wait for her at the corner of the Vennel, and went home to beg a penny from her mother, but the mother was absent, and upon further search was not to be found in any of the whiskey-shops or "shebeens" in High Street. The two girls went along High Street and the Salt-market, pondering as to the best means of raising twopence, Jane wondering if begging in Argyle Street or George Square of the well-dressed would be of any use, and her friend considering it too late, and but a poor chance. "If we cud ony find anything handy at a shop door!" suggested Mary; and Jane thought it *would* be a stroke of luck just then. The suggestion did not shock her; she did not even know that thieving was wrong, only that it was punishable if found out. She had a healthy horror of a prison just at that period, and feared being locked up and tried the next morning by the bailie—locked away for ten days from "Cannie Jock." But, if it were pos-

sible to secure something without being perceived, it would be a piece of good fortune on which to congratulate herself. Those little shopkeepers with their plenitude of goods were people of wealth and position to her—they could afford to lose a few things from their store—they would in all probability never miss them.

The girls wandered up and down, looking into all the shop windows, more especially the cheap haberdashers' shops, where customers were likely to be. One small shop at the corner of the street possessed two customers at this juncture; the man behind the counter was busy, his attention was utterly absorbed, but there was nothing at the door.

"Gang in and ask for somethin', Jane," was the second suggestion of her infamous companion —"somethin' they hae not got. Luke at the heaps o' things on the counter! If ye can brush some o 'em aff wi' your elbow, I'll slide in and pick 'em up."

"Ye gang in," was the not unnatural suggestion of Jane.

"Oh! but they ken me; they'll be suspicious o' me there."

Jane, full of the perfidy of her juvenile lover, and buoyed up with the hope of confronting him at the "skeel," went suddenly into the shop, and took her place by the side of the two women deep in the purchase of a few trifling articles. The shopkeeper glanced at Jane, and then resumed his attentions to the earlier arrivals. The cheap goods that had been examined were within handy reach of Cameron: "if he would only turn his back for a moment and forget them!" thought the child, with a heart which throbbed fearfully with the excitement of the first experiment.

"I thought my heart would burst," was her comment upon this incident, "I was sae afeard o' bein' foond oot—naethin' else. I didna think o' anythin' but my Johnnie dancing with the Frazers, and if I could ony get at the ribbons or the gloves and mak' awa' wi' them!"

She forgot Mary Loggie's injunction to sweep something off the counter with her elbow; she was anxious to secure a roll of ribbon. "It was narrow blue ribbon with a silver edging—I can see it now," was her remark. It was very handy

to her grasp, if the shopkeeper's vigilance would only relax for an instant.

And it did relax—the man turned aside, and Jane slid the ribbon off the counter, and stood holding it in her hand whilst trembling at the boldness of the crime which she had committed.

"When I had gat it, I did not ken what to do wi' it," she related. "I stood all stupid like, holding it in my hand behind me. If he had only looked at me, he would have guessed at ance that I had stolen somethin'."

But the man suspected nothing, and, before he had turned round, Jane felt the ribbon taken softly from her hand by Mary Loggie. How to get out of the shop herself, was now her perplexity. She stood revolving in her mind what to ask for—what it was possible to ask for which the man possessed not? When he turned round she feared that he would miss the little blue roll of ribbon and charge her with the theft, and her knees continued to knock together with fright. The suspense of waiting was too much for her, and she asked at last, whilst the man was speaking

to his customers, if he had any gloves as low as three halfpence a pair: a wild question, which the man answered by a sharp "No," and left Jane with an excuse to retire. He looked along the counter again, missing not the ribbon, but drawing the other articles with which it was strewn nearer to him, as if by instinct, and Jane crept slowly, painfully out of the shop, as though there were leaden weights at her heels. In the street she flew like a mad thing down the nearest close, and made her way towards the dancing school, expecting to meet Mary Loggie at the door thereof. But no Mary Loggie rewarded her search, and it was not till half an hour had passed, and when Jane was beginning to despair of seeing her, that the girl turned up at the appointed place.

"Where's the ribbon?" was the impatient query.

"It's a' richt, Jane—ye're safe—they canna tak' ye up for this."

"What hae ye din wi' it?"

"I hae taen it to the Wee Pawn,* and got saxpence upon it."

* Wee Pawns are common to all Scotch towns—small pawnbroking establishments, where goods are pawned, or supposed

"Capital, Mary—capital!"

Now the danger was over, and the excitement past, the result was "capital"—such was the moral condition of Jane Cameron at this early stage!

They entered the dancing school, received their change, and found "Cannie Jock" indulging in "a little nut"—as the dance was termed in which most of the company were engaged at that moment. After the dance, Jane sought out her lover, and taxed him with his want of faithfulness; but Jock was prolific with excuses—the Frazer girls had bothered him to treat them, and he had had a "find" of a purse with seventeen shillings in it, and had been induced to treat everybody. Twice had he been in the close looking for her, he swore with a hundred oaths; and Jane was ready to believe him and forgive him; she told him that night the story of the theft—how she and Mary

to be pawned, for a few hours only, at rates which are exorbitant in the extreme. A blanket from a bed, for instance, is left in pledge in the morning for a penny, and redeemed in the evening for three halfpence or twopence—that is, fifty or a hundred per cent. on the loan. Many proprietors of these Wee Pawns are receivers of stolen goods, it may be readily imagined: much that is stolen in Glasgow is traceable to their depôts.

Loggie had stolen the ribbon from the haberdasher's —and he patted her on the back, said, "Bravo, my lassie!" and took his oath upon the spot that it was well done, and he did not think that she had had so much pluck in her!

From the "skeel" they went to Loggie's house, where, with a boy's, or a thief's, prodigality, he treated his friends to a bottle of whiskey, and recited Jane Cameron's first attempt amidst the plaudits of the assembled company. They drank Jane Cameron's health that night, they flattered her, kissed her, turned her head with praise, and made her drink whiskey till she sank stupefied into a corner, and was too insensible to enter an appearance at her mother's quarters in the New Vennel that night.

The poor girl was proud of her success—she had been fêted by the infamous gang on having escaped detection. To her disordered fancy it seemed altogether a better and brighter life than working in the cotton-mill, and being half starved on her return by her mother. It was an easy way of earning money—where was the harm? Why

had she lost two or three years of practice which might have made her skilful at the business?

These were her thoughts, she assured her auditor, some years ago; there was no remorse—only pride, excitement, hope of attaining future excellence in the one downward career upon which she had entered, and from which, alas! there was no turning back—a first step made with no knowledge of its being a step farther from good—a step that is made every day by children like unto her, and younger than she was. It is a soul-harrowing picture. I pray that the drawing of it here, even by a hand as feeble and unpractised as my own, may stir the hearts of those who war with evil to bolder and more energetic efforts in the great Cause which seeks to thwart the tempter of mankind.

CHAPTER VI.

LEFT ALONE IN THE WORLD.

JANE went from Loggie's house to the cotton-mill at a late hour, just in time to receive her small modicum of wage and take it to her mother, who was anxiously expecting her. The whiskey drank yesternight was still confusing her faculties; to her mother's inquiries, which, by way of surprise, were more strict than usual, Jane had but a confused explanation to return. The mother was irritable that day also, vexed at the small amount of money brought home, and began to scold, and finally to strike her daughter.

Jane Cameron remembers resisting her mother, who was by no means a strong woman—fighting, kicking, plunging, in her grasp. She was wholly

unsettled now; a girl with no respect for her mother, one whose head had been turned by much flattery, excitement, and temptation. She was not backward in her replies, asserted her right to do as she chose, taunted her mother with the past cruelty in shutting her out on the common stair—her who could get a comfortable home with the Loggies, whenever she chose to ask for it.

"Ye had better gang and live there, ye hussy," screamed Mrs. Cameron, after the daughter, who had wrenched herself away and was flying downstairs towards the street again, "I 'll lock ye oot gin ye ever come back here. And what's mair, I'll let those Loggies ken what I think o' them—see if I dinna!"

Jane ran to the Loggies to apprise them of the coming visitor, but Mrs. Cameron never appeared, and Jane saw her in a whiskey-shop three hours afterwards, drunk and abusive, and reckless of official authority. Mrs. Cameron was locked up that night, and when set free again made no comment upon Jane's past act of rebellion, but treated her even in a way less indifferent and cruel.

"We were better friends after that—she was

more of a mither till her cush came back again."

The man who came back—more of a coward and bully, and whom Jane hated more and more with every day—was destined not to trouble our guilty heroine's life much longer. There was a great parting coming for all in that little top room in the New Vennel—it came about in this wise:—

A robbery had been committed in the Vennel after the old fashion—a robbery that was not taken quietly by the victim, but reported at the police station, and registered in the police books. The detectives were set on the track, and the thieves, who had scent of these inquiries as quickly as the police, were on their guard, and watchful. The man had been lured into the Vennel in a semi-state of intoxication, and robbed of a large amount of money—fifty pounds and some odd silver he alleged to have been stolen from him. He knew very little of the locality in which the occurrence had taken place, but insisted that it was in the New Vennel—a place with which he appeared to be perfectly acquainted. Suspicion fastened itself upon Mother Cameron's

den; a raid was made thereon, however without success, and the police were for a while baffled in their search. Jane Cameron found herself one morning confronted by a detective—only a few mornings after her own defalcation—and gave herself up for lost. She was proceeding to the cotton-mill when she met him. He stopped to talk to her, ask a great many irrelevant questions, compliment her on her increase of stature and improvement in good looks, finally to work round to the question, of who was at her mother's house on a certain night in September 18——? Jane Cameron was a girl always on her guard, however; she had had experience enough of life to know that police attentions were dangerous, and inquiries by suave officials likely to lead other people into trouble, and was artful enough to be deficient in information and weak in memory just then.

"Never tell the truth, if ye can help it, to the police," was the first caution instilled into her by her mother, and the ruffian whom she considered her father. Jane Cameron, it may be premised, was well acquainted with the details of that

particular case of felony; she had reached home early that night, and been a witness to the arrival of the victim, and the deliberate manner in which he had been drugged and robbed, her mother sitting by the fire, and taking no notice of proceedings—"leaving it all to the young uns," as she was in the habit of terming it. Jane had gone to sleep in the midst of the scene—so callous had she become to these every-day incidents—and had only been awakened by a friend entering to help Mrs. Cameron's lodgers downstairs with the "sleepy gent." The facts had been impressed more vividly than usual upon her mind, by the whole cortége slipping two steps, and coming down of a heap on the stairs, amidst the laughter of a dissolute crew, who watched the proceedings from the top flat. There was no mystery practised in this case; it was supposed that everybody could be trusted in the Vennel: "Cameron's lodgers' turn to-day; the next-door neighbour's to-morrow!"

This was a mistake, however, and in this instance there was less honour amongst thieves than usual. The facts of the case began to ooze out

in some mysterious way; the principal offender was arrested at a public house patronized by suspicious characters, and the news spread with a rapidity from close to close, wynd to vennel, wherever lived a friend or relation of the guilty ones. The thieves have a system of communicating news which is certainly more rapid than that in force amongst the police. Mrs. Cameron was apprised of danger within a few minutes of the chief offender's arrest; and if the chief offender made a clean confession—which was considered likely—so much the worse for Mrs. Cameron's prospects in life. Mrs. Cameron saw that her good name was likely to suffer in this instance—that it was a serious case—and disappeared.

Jane Cameron came home that evening from the "skeel" at a late hour, and found the place vacated by her mother, and possession already taken of the domicile by her neighbour, a woman who also let lodgings, and was far from particular as to her lodgers' character. A hasty bargain had evidently been struck up between Mrs.

Cameron and her neighbour before the former's flitting, and the furniture and fixtures—that was, one chair, a stool, a few shavings, and a tin mug—disposed of at a sacrifice.

From this hasty sale, this unlooked-for departure of the mother, evolved the whole after-career of Jane Cameron—it turned her life into a new groove on the instant. There is no asserting that her life would have been better or purer had the mother not suddenly vanished away from her—her life had already lost its purity; she had begun to hate work, and perceive the advantages of stealing—but at least there would have been more time to think, and by some miracle a hand might have been stretched forth to save her from the darkness closing around her. But here the shadows closed at once, and shut out every chance. At twelve years of age she was left to work her own way in life—left motherless and alone in a city of temptation.

She was dashed down at once. The new occupant of her mother's rooms was a hard-hearted termagant, and refused all admittance to the girl—even for one night—though her apart-

ments were not full, and no more lodgers were expected.

"I'll hae na gals hangin' aboot my house," she asserted; "they're alwa bringin' folk into trooble wi' their tongues. And you hae too muckle by a lang deal."

"Where's mither?"

"Gane awa'."

"But when's she comin back?"

"She'll never come back to Glasgie, if she's a wise woman. She said she'd never come back."

"How am I to find her?"

"She's maun tired o' ye—and no wonder—ganging the gait that ye've been at a' yer leef. Hoot awa'—na wonder she be glad to be shut o' sic an idle lassie."

"Where am I to go?"

"Gae to the workus—or the refuge—ye winna coom here, I tell ye."

"I shan't do that!" cried Jane.

"Do what ye list."

The door banged to, and Jane was shut out on the common stair. This was no more than her own mother had done hundreds of times; she

might have curled herself in a corner of the flat and fallen asleep, if the cold would have allowed her, but she had grown older, and was not likely to adopt that course any longer. She was a girl, with all the girl's tender feelings not entirely obliterated; through the rough ordeal of her neglected childhood, there were some childish traits still, even some instinctive affection for the mother who had so cruelly deserted her. She sat down at the stair-head, covered her face with her apron, and began to cry. The desolateness of her position, the uncertainty of the life before her, the consciousness of being left alone in the world with no more compunction than a cat or dog might have been left, unnerved her, and this strong, bold girl gave way at the murky prospect stretching out before her.

"I canna say what I cried for," was her remark at this crisis in her fate—"not that she hadna taken me wi' her, but that she had shaken me off without a thocht. It was the first time that I had gien wa' sin I was sax years oold. I was troobled—I didna see what to do—I was even afeared I might be starved to death noo."

After sitting on the stairs about half an hour, Jane went slowly into the street again. She was well acquainted with her mother's haunts, her mother's friends, and thought that it was possible to discover her after all. She made the tour of inspection, and learned no news of Mrs. Cameron's whereabouts—only elicited the fact that she had been heard to express her determination to leave Glasgow at once, before it became too hot to hold her. One more fact she discovered, that the man who had been the *bête noire* of her young life had gone away with Mrs. Cameron, and therefore that it was a studied desertion, which it was not probable any power of her own could remedy. She was thrown upon her resources, and would have to get her own living in the best way that presented itself. She would have gone at once to "Cannie Jock" and have asked his advice, if she had known where to find him; failing this, she went to the Loggies, people who had at least been kind to her, and who she thought would be kind to her again. She would take their advice as to the best method of proceeding on the dark road that lay before her. There was no one else in whom this poor wanderer could confide!

It was three in the morning when she went up the stairs of the house in the High Street Close to Loggie's home on the first flat. She knocked several times before an answer was returned to her; then Loggie's voice, in far from amiable accents, inquired who was there.

"Jennie," was the answer.

"What's the matter? What do ye want?"

"I thought ye'd gie me a nicht's rest—mither's run awa' frae me." Loggie appeared to hesitate, and Jane Cameron's heart sank with suspense. If he turned her away too!—if she were thrown upon the refuge, or the workhouse!

"Ye can come in for ance," he muttered, withdrawing the bolt at last—"we're vera full here, though. Here, sit ye doon by the fire, and dinna stir it. It's banked oop for the nicht."

Mr. Loggie turned into bed again, and Jane sat down before the fire, whose friendly warmth drew her off to sleep. She was very grateful for this shelter from the world—very thankful that she had not been driven to the Refuge for the Destitute.

I have often wondered, if the Loggies had been

less good-natured, if the girl had been driven to a home where thoughtful, pious men and women would have met her for the first time, whether her life might have not been far different from the one it has become my task to shadow forth.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. LOGGIE'S ADVICE.

MRS. LOGGIE was stirring before daylight, preparing coffee for those moneyed lodgers who might feel inclined to have breakfast before departure; and Mr. Loggie was also shuffling about the room in a pair of slippers, a little while after his spouse's début. The lodgers, who took things easily, and had no particular work on hand, did not rise early that morning, and when breakfast was ready, there was time for the amiable couple to hear all that Jane Cameron had to relate with respect to her mother's desertion.

Mr. Loggie sat, smoked, and listened to all the details. Mrs. Loggie looked from Jane to her husband. When the story was finished, Mr.

Loggie volunteered his advice in a fashion akin to this:—

"If we're respectable eno' for ye, ye can lodge here for a shilling a week; if ye dinna mind making shift in odd corners, and keeping quiet as to what ye see and hear, ye may stap, and we'll trust ye for a week or twa on the chance o' payin' gin anythin' turns up. Ye can get siller if ye keep your een open, or somethin that I may take instead o' it, and we're na likely to ask questions as to how ye get it. Ye are a quick lassie, Mary tells me."

"Yes, I'm quick eno'."

"Then I'd advise ye to stay here, and begin *business* for your ainsel. Do what ye list; we'll keep quiet on the matter, and when ye're lucky eno' to get a gude prize, p'raps ye'll think o' us who hae helped ye at a pinch. All my gals are doing well eno'—even Mary."

"And th' cotton-spinnin?"

"Wark at it as hard as ever, my lassie," was the advice proffered here, "and as long as they'll keep ye. The police are sure to speer ye wi' a great many questions as to where ye are warkin', and

it keeps them satisfied if they think that ye are in place. When ye are out of wark, and yet hae money to spend, they get unco suspicious. Will ye hae breakfast wi' us?"

Jane assented to this very willingly.

"All that ye hae, will be scored up against ye, to be paid for when ye can, and I dinna fear that ye will be able to pay us."

Jane did not fear that she should be unable to pay them in good time—she took her first breakfast on credit, and sealed the devil's compact with Mr. Loggie, lodging house keeper. She went to the cotton-mill at the usual hour, came home to dinner, and received further advice as to the best method of proceeding in life. Mr. Loggie only gave her advice by instalments, watching its effect upon the recipient, and drawing in his horns, or increasing his effective eloquence, according to the result upon the individual addressed. In three days Mr. Loggie had fully initiated Jane into all the mysteries of Glasgow thieving, and all the best chances of success therein. "Cannie Jock" had seen her during that period, and commended her for the resolution

which she had formed of boldly entering the profession—the profession itself had been introduced to her in due course; she was enrolled with as much formality into the fraternity of vice, as though she had entered any respectable service requiring an equal amount of precaution.

Into the art of thieving she was initiated by the elder daughters of Loggie; in quiet hours lessons were given in pocket-picking and shop-lifting, and Jane, naturally quick, began to evince a degree of excellence for which her teachers had not bargained. She was taught to be a thief, and flattered into being one—golden prospects of a future made glorious by earning large sums of money, and spending them, were dwelt upon, until their brightness dazzled her—the life before her seemed a happy one—she was glad that she had come to live with the Loggies!

"Money—we make lots of money—the police ken not half the money we make in lucky times o' the year," said Loggie: an assertion which John Ewan verified, although his luck had not been very apparent of late.

Loggie's assertion is true enough. The police are

not aware of the extent to which robberies are carried on, and the many crimes that are committed in secret, to the one that is detected and punished. A thief calculates on six months', even on twelve months', security from conviction; there are some who have been free for five and six years, and have "earned" a large amount of money in that period. Some of these Scotch thieves, more especially the female thieves, as will be presently seen, are often in possession of fifty, even a hundred, pounds—a sum which is lavished away recklessly—dissipated in the course of a few weeks. Receivers of stolen goods, like Loggie, often amass considerable wealth by speculating in bank notes of a heavy amount which are difficult to change—giving even as much as seventy pounds in gold for a hundred pound note, and starting to London or Liverpool to change it. Some curious statistics with regard to thieves' earnings have been more than once presented to committees by governors of prisons, &c., who have closely questioned the prisoners on their former lives; the confession is true enough, and affords a startling picture of the

success of some of these men and women. A man tolerably lucky throughout his life may earn seven or eight thousand pounds—has been even known to earn it; and a thief's income has been averaged at three hundred to four hundred a year, which is possibly below the average, such is the gross carelessness of well-to-do people, and the incessant watch of those who prey upon them. There is very little real reformation in the *professional* thief—he or she is the hardest and most inflexible subject to deal with in our prisons. Religion has, God be thanked, worked its miracle of regeneration here and there, but the instances of real penitence are few and far between. Men and women of this character, who have by a life of crime reckoned their wages of sin by hundreds of pounds, find it almost impossible to settle down to a steady and arduous life, recompensed by a few shillings a week. And female professional thieves are harder, perhaps, to reform than the male portion; if they be more impressionable, they are also more easily influenced for evil, more prone to fall back upon their old life when the prison gates are once more unbarred for them.

The Prisoners' Aid Society, quietly and steadily working to reform these characters, has, however, some fair stories to tell of the sinner's repentance after a long career of vicious indulgence, when the first good impulse that brings the penitent to its shelter, to ask its advice in the honest world which is so strange a sphere for him, has been worked upon to the honour of its earnest servants, and the glory of Him whose faithful followers they are. Of this Society more anon; but it is pleasant to break in upon the dark shadows of the story with the brighter thought that, amidst the number resolved to sin on to the end, there *are* a few who turn away from evil, and seek refuge and honest counsel at the last.

To return to Jane Cameron. Be it understood, then, by those who have the courage or heart to follow this sad chronicle, that she had become a professional thief—and that she entered upon her career without one throb of remorse. At twelve years of age she no more knew good from evil than when she was an infant at her mother's breast—she felt that she had been ill-treated by her mother,

and that there was only one way of living open to her. Of religion she knew nothing—of a Bible she had never heard—the books in the shop-windows were a mystery to her; around her were hundreds of boys and girls, men and women, whose lives were spent in stealing for a living—stealing from those who could afford to lose, who were never likely to miss what was taken from them; such is the consolation sentimental thieves—those who think of the matter at all—take to themselves. All this in the very early stage of proceedings; the life is a hardening process, and one cares for nothing, studies nothing, after a while.

Jane Cameron strolled about the streets, and lingered at the corners of the closes, with a motive now; she, Mary Loggie, and "Cannie Jock" worked together; many a long practice at the art of passing a stolen article from hand to hand had taken place in Loggie's rooms.

"Never pass a crowd on any pretence," was the thief's motto, ingrained upon Jane's memory; and she was always looking out for crowds, and praying for a chance therein, by which she might pay

off the debt which was accumulating against her at the High Street Close. She was attached to the Loggies; a girl that was grateful for the interested charity which had been proffered her, and whose gratitude it was difficult to shake. The vile young reprobate who was her accomplice sought to shake it; he did not like the Loggies, and took every opportunity to assure Jennie that she was putting herself too much in old Loggie's power. He liked Mary very well, but he objected to old Loggie; he was a jealous youth in his turn, and even objected to the lads she met there when his back was turned. He was only waiting for a good haul, he told her; then they would take a room to themselves, or go partners with another couple who were thinking of starting in life also, and if they couldn't manage better than with that —— Loggie, he was not wide awake in the world, that was all!

Poor Jane Cameron began to build upon the "good haul" which John Ewan had promised himself. That would be happiness indeed, when they had a room in the Vennel or the Havannah, and there was no one to take care of her boy *husband*

save herself. Still for the nonce she was grateful to the Loggies, and attached to Mary, who had taught her to shift for herself in the world. She had been a week at the High Street Close, which for the sake of a name I may as well term Close No. 700, High Street, when she made her second attempt, in concert with Mary, to raise a little capital on her own account. This was on a Saturday night, when the streets are fuller and more drunken people than usual are in the poorer thoroughfares of Glasgow. Crowds collect every half-hour in the vicinity of the Salt-market, where whiskey-shops are prolific, and wanderers through this part of Glasgow stop to see what is the matter, and ascertain if possible what the man or woman has done who is being taken to the station-house.

It was arranged that Jane Cameron was to mingle with any crowd that might be found, and if a respectable man or woman should be seen to mix with it, to attempt the new art in which she had already given signs of proficiency. "Cannie Jock" and Mary were to be on the watch, ready to receive any article that Jane might be fortunate—

unfortunate!—enough to procure; there were other old pals about the Salt-market ready to pass it on still further in a case of emergency.

A crowd collected after a while—a crowd purposely got together by one of Loggie's gang. People coming up and down the street stopped to see what was the cause of disturbance; a sunburnt lad in a blue jacket with gilt buttons halted also for an instant, and in that instant Jane's guilty hand had glided under his arm into his breast pocket, secured a pocket-book, passed it with lightning-like rapidity to Mary, who passed it to Ewan, who disappeared down the close. It was all very suddenly accomplished, the crowd had surged to and fro, and in the hustling the young stranger had detected nothing to arouse his suspicions, and had even gone on his way again without being conscious of his loss.

Five minutes after the robbery, the three children—they were little else—met in Loggie's house, where the news had already spread, and where Loggie was awaiting them. "Cannie Jock" opened the pocket-book, and produced two five-pound Bank of England notes and a few shillings in silver.

"No gold?" commented Loggie, who had no belief in honour amongst thieves.

"No gold," affirmed Ewan, whose word was bound to be believed in the absence of any proof to the contrary.

The notes were purchased at the usual discount by Loggie, and the sum realised shared between the three young thieves on the instant, after a certain percentage had been claimed by and allowed to Loggie, and Jennie's share considerably diminished by payment of arrears. Then the three went into the streets again, in the hope of another chance before the night was out, and separated to different quarters of the city, suspicion being likely to be aroused if seen too often together.

Jane fancied that suspicion was already aroused, the police eyed her furtively that night; and the detectives scouring the streets in their private dresses nodded towards her in so meaning a manner, and looked at her so hard. But suspicion was not awakened concerning the theft of that particular night; the police knew nothing concerning it as yet, and were only distrustful of her general movements. It was known to all

the force that little Cameron had been deserted by her mother, had left the New Vennel for Close No. 700, and gone to live with the Loggies; and people who lived with the Loggies were always of a doubtful class. They knew that Jane Cameron was going wrong, and would be presently in the police court, and then in Glasgow prison; it was a matter of certainty which must occur in due course; they had seen these things hundreds of times, and had never known an exception to the rule.

Jane was new to the business still, and still nervous; a young recruit in the devil's regiment, where coolness and audacity are only acquired by practice. By herself in the lighted streets, she did not dare to attempt a second theft that night, but she was elated with her first essay in pocket-picking, proud of the good words they had all bestowed upon her at home. She wandered about the streets till 10 o'clock, meeting Jock or Mary occasionally, and passing them without a word, and then returned to the close, where that evening there was more whiskey-drinking than usual, and Jane Cameron'

health was drunk, and the girl's head turned with coarse flattery. They got up a dance that evening amongst themselves, and in this whirl of high spirits, reckless gaiety, and horrible ignorance, the evil sank deeper into the girl's heart, and she joined in the laugh against the little good of which she had ever heard.

CHAPTER VIII.

"BAD LUCK."

It is not my intention to present the reader with a complete catalogue of the offences of Jane Cameron, or trace minutely step by step her progress downwards to all moral death. Such a plan would be but a tedious recapitulation, and far from the intention which I formed in presenting this dark history to the world.

Still I am anxious to render this a complete life—to extenuate nothing which may afford the reader an opportunity of estimating the true character of Cameron, and of tracing her through the several phases of her adventurous life. In avoiding all iteration as much as possible, I shall not suffer to escape me those salient points

which illustrate a criminal career, or throw some new light upon the manners and customs of "the dangerous classes."

Briefly, then, let me pass over six months more of Jane Cameron's life; the six months which wholly changed her and settled her character for the worst. She was nearly thirteen years of age then; tall for her age, a woman, and worse than most women in thought and action. During that period she had seen nothing of her mother, who had evidently left Glasgow for good; she had been constantly successful in her petty thefts, her shop-lifting and her pocket-picking; she was still working at the cotton-mills in the daytime, was frequenting all places of debauchery at night; she had parted with honesty, modesty, virtue; her only trait of character expressive of a something in her nature that might have been traced to a higher purpose was her unflinching fidelity to the scamp who had done so much to sink her.

And I may say here, that this is no uncommon fidelity amongst those poor unfortunates who constitute themselves the companions of thieves.

With all sense of modesty dead within them, with no knowledge of the rules governing polite society, they are as faithful as wives to those men who have professed a liking to them, and they cling to them through all the several gradations of evil, in their good fortune and their bad, until a long sentence, or death, or the man's own inconstancy, sets them apart. These female thieves, consorting with thieves, hold in supreme contempt those fallen sisters of theirs parading their painted cheeks in the gas-light; they will enact their characters at times for the purposes of deception, but the "cush" is on the alert, and steps in to rob the victim when the field lies open for his depredations. Even female thieves who have no particular attachment to one man pride themselves upon their chasteness of conduct, and only sin with the hope of robbing the man who has been foolish and wicked enough to be enticed away by them. All this is more strikingly exemplified amongst the Glasgow and Edinburgh thieves than the London. I dwell upon this painful explanation for the better understanding of what follows in due course.

Constant success is dangerous; it engenders false confidence, which deceives and ensnares. This is particularly applicable to thieving. Jane Cameron had been successful, and had lost every particle of old fears of the prison. She had become more than ordinarily bold, and had more than once escaped the clutch of the police officer as by a miracle. Still with all her "run of luck" there had been no more ten pounds obtained by a single larceny; and Cannie Jock's "good haul" was still in prospective, and still being looked forward to. It was Jane Cameron at this particular juncture who supported her paramour by odd shillings and half-crowns; it would be different presently, the sanguine thief was constantly remarking; his vanity assured him that he should distinguish himself in the bad time coming.

This lad, now fifteen years of age or thereabouts, could read and write pretty well; he was as infatuated with his vicious calling as more honest lads are with those moral professions to which they have begun to devote themselves. He was ever fond of recounting to Jane the lives and

adventures of vagabonds whose careers had for a while been more successful than his own; he knew the whole history of Dick Turpin, and with every chapter of Harrison Ainsworth's novel — that unfortunate novel which has worked much mischief and been the ruin of many foolish youths—he was as familiar as the author. All thieves it may be premised know the story of Jack Sheppard from Ainsworth's novel, and the plays which have been founded upon it; all thieves reverence Jack Sheppard as the one great man and inimitable model; half of them are romantic enough, in the midst of their morbid depravity, to believe that they may become as celebrated and be talked of as much. Johnnie Ewan fully believed in the dawn of his coming greatness, and put up with the adverse circumstances of the present like a philosopher.

It was summer-time when Jane Cameron's luck took a turn in the wrong direction; this occurred before she was thirteen years of age. The tourists from various towns were passing through Glasgow in considerable numbers at this period of the year, and it was a rule amongst the

pocket-picking fraternity to look out for them in particular; for the females to throw themselves in their way, to haunt the hotels in George Square, Buchanan Street, and Argyle Street. Jane was employed constantly as a decoy now; she was pretty, she looked as well in a silk dress and bonnet, which she put on now and then, as in the humble factory girl's dress, which was her more constant wear. "Glasgie lasses do well in the summer," was Jane Cameron's confession; "there are lots of young men with siller in the city, and they keep late hours, and dinna mind what part o' Glasgie they visit for the change. They are much oftener in the High Street and Salt-market after us, than we in the grand squares after them."

The tourists, young and inexperienced, who read this may possibly be more careful of chance acquaintances in the Glasgow streets, after this avowal; there are a host of dangerous actresses, whose appearances are deceptive, therein; who can feign the modest factory-girl anxious to escape from their polite attentions, as well as other characters less difficult to personate.

Jane Cameron was an actress at that time; she had studied her part well; the lessons that had been taught her at Loggie's had been conned over and elaborated; six months' proficiency in crime had rendered her as clever, artful, and dangerous as the rest. She was known now to be a thief by the police; they were no longer suspicious on that point, but they were baffled at present, and were more than commonly anxious to secure her.

In the Salt-market, one summer night then, Jane in her every-day dress, with her bare head and her naked feet, the picture of modest poverty, hurrying homewards, attracted the attention of an English tourist, a stranger to the town. Jane confesses to have half returned his impudent smile, then to have feigned alarm at his attempt to address her, finally to have listened to him with a shyness and embarrassment which lured the young profligate on. It ended in Mary Loggie joining them, and suggesting after a while that a glass of whiskey each would be a fitting prelude to their better acquaintance, in all three proceeding to a whiskey-shop in the Salt-market,

where it was hoped that the young man would drink deeply, and render himself more open to the coming attempt upon his purse. There at the bar of the whiskey-shop, the three laughed and talked, and two watched keenly the progress of events—outside in the street two men, neither of them Ewan, who was not considered old enough yet for this portion of the business, prowled to and fro, and were ready to assist, if necessary, to pass the money, or to attack the victim, if in the ordinary course of events he was induced into the closes, yawning like black gulfs on each side of the Salt-market.

The business, however, was settled without rough means; before the second glass of whiskey was drunk, the purse of the stranger was in Jane Cameron's possession, and all that was required was to decamp as speedily as possible. Jane Cameron, purse in hand, made an excuse to speak to a friend outside for an instant, leaving Mary with the tourist. She was to watch her opportunity and follow also, but the dupe's suspicions had been aroused by Jane's hasty departure, and the purse was discovered to be

missing before Mary could find a chance of imitating her companion's example.

Then followed the usual details, which occur so frequently in our newspapers that it is a wonder that there are any persons left to be deceived by these shallow artifices:—Mary Loggie charged with the theft, an indignant denial, a crowd round the door, a policeman sent for, and the accomplice marched off to the Central Police Court, with a crowd of the Glasgow unwashed at her heels.

Before Jane Cameron reached Loggie's house the news had been received that Mary Loggie was in custody. The money was entrusted to the safer keeping of Loggie, who left home at once, there being notes that it would be awkward to discover on the premises. As Jane Cameron might be also fully described by the victim, and identified, it was considered advisable that she should vacate Close No. 700 for the present, until the facts of the case had transpired at the examination, and it was known what there was to fear or elude.

This was Cameron's first sense of danger, and without waiting for any further instructions from Mrs. Loggie, she hastened out of the Close, and

went direct to the lodgings of "Cannie Jock," who, rolling stone as he was, and secretive as was his disposition, had sufficient confidence in Jane to keep his location no longer a mystery.

Ewan was lodging in a house in the Old Wynd at that time, and was absent when Jane arrived. It was early for thieves to be at home for the night, and Jane sat herself down in a corner of the room to wait for him. Had she reflected a moment, or waited for Mrs. Loggie's further advice, she might have considered that the course she had adopted was one of considerable risk: the detective police knowing the degree of relationship existing betwen her and Ewan, and missing her at Loggies', would come on to this quarter, if it could be ascertained from any communicative thief where "Cannie Jock" was likely to be lodging. Jane Cameron did not believe that her partiality for Ewan was generally known, and considered herself safe in this quarter, even if there had not been a hope of her identity being difficult to establish. She felt almost safe here, although the child's fear had stolen back to her heart, and a little disturbed her that night. After all, she

was but a child, and the events of that evening had brought back the child's feeling—the old dread of prison which she had been ever unable to conquer, and which dissipated some of that oldness of thought or hardness of heart that had gained terrible ground during the last six months.

Jane Cameron was not long alone in that stifling back room at the top of the house, to which stern necessity had banished John Ewan. The room was a place for many lodgers, something like the mother's house in the New Vennel, where all that the floor could accommodate were admitted at the rate of two-pence per head. By eleven o'clock three or four lodgers had arrived, and were discussing the topics of the day, previous to turning in to their shavings for the night: by a quarter past eleven, and before Ewan had made his appearance, there came a suspicious knocking with a stick on the panels of the door.

The lodging-house keeper, an old hag, who was already undressed in a corner under the window, screamed out from her lair,

"Who's there?"

"Open the door, will you," said the rough voice of a man without.

"Who is it?"

"THE POLICE!"

The lodgers looked from one to the other, and then towards Jane Cameron. They were no novelties, these nocturnal visits of the police; at all hours of the day and night legal authority has free access to houses of a doubtful character; Jane Cameron had seen the police a dozen times at Loggies', but had never felt her heart sink, or her tongue grow so dry in her mouth, as at that moment. It was her first impression of a punishment for crime—of the arm of the law being stretched forth to arrest her in the course in which she believed herself so safe. She knew by instinct that the police were coming for her.

"Oh! hide me somewhere!—canna I get oot o' the window?—it's for me, it's for me!"

"Hold your jaw, ye fule," said the mother of the "house;" "it's mayhap naethin', and if it beant naethin', they'll na kill ye for anythin' that ye've doon. Unbolt the door, Jamie, my mon."

Jamie my mon withdrew the bolt, and the

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detective and constable entered, slowly, carefully, officially, with that comprehensive glance which takes in everything and says nothing for a while.

"Well, Mrs. Green," said the detective.

"Well, what 's up now?"

"We don't want you."

"I should think na."

The keen eyes of the detective were fixed on Cameron, who clung to the mantelpiece, and breathed hard.

"We want you to come with us down to the station, Jennie," he said.

"Very well," gasped the young girl.

She moved towards the door; at the door she asked what was the charge.

"Nothing particular—you'll hear down there. P'raps it's a mistake," he added somewhat kindly.

"P'raps it is."

"You've been keeping bad company, you see, Jennie, and it's brought you almost into trouble. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

Down the stairs, passing flat after flat, to

the lower story and draughty lane, through the lane or wynd, to the streets adjacent, finally round to the back of the great Central Police Station—then of smaller dimensions than it is at the present day—through the first open gateway and across the paved yard to the lighted office on the other side, where the low long counter was, and the desks behind it, and the clerks at their books—the great books of charges and committals, which are so speedily filled, and are the saddest reading in the world.

The detectives passed round to the back of the counter; the chief clerk left his desk to interrogate Jane after a few words with the officers who had just arrived; the policeman on duty in the court, and whose province it is to see that no one makes a hasty retreat into Nelson Street or thereabouts, approached Jane's side; the man whom Jane had robbed a few hours previously made his appearance, and looked steadily at the arrested girl.

"Is this the girl?"

"Yes."

"You can swear to that?"

"I'll take my oath of it, anywhere."

The interrogator applied his mouth to a small orifice in the wall and called up through a tubing, "Send down the female searcher." The female searcher appeared, and conducted Jane to a room on the right of the office, where a search was made for the purse long since gone on its way, and where all that Jane was possessed of—her own purse with a few shillings therein, a thimble, a needle-case, &c.—were appropriated for the nonce. The search completed, Jane and the female searcher returned to the office, where her name was entered in the great books, the articles taken from her registered, the man who had been robbed again asked the question if he felt prepared to swear that this was the girl who had stolen his purse in a whiskey-shop in the Salt-market.

The man was still positive, Jane hazarded a faint denial, and then the matter was ended for that evening.

"Lock this girl up," was the stern mandate; and Jane followed the gaoler out of the office and up the stairs to the cells on the first floor—cells

very large, but very few in number at that period.

The door opened, a stifling vapour saluted her by way of welcome; she entered the unhealthy and dark den, where the inmates were whispering and talking at the time; the key turned on her, and her first experience of the law began.

CHAPTER IX.

BEFORE THE BAILIE.

THE police cell at Glasgow appropriated for women was a large square receptacle, into which all night charges were hustled, there to wait the morning's reflection and the morning's judgment. I believe that there were no separate cells for prisoners at that period, and that it was not till a year or two later that those important alterations of the Central Police Court were made which now constitute it one of the first buildings of its kind in the United Kingdom.

The night cell of the Glasgow Police Court was a stern initiation into the process of the law for Jane Cameron. She had heard of it more than once from her contemporaries, but had failed to

realize the idea until the door clanged behind her, and shut her in with the darkness. Her heart sank lower than ever; she was the child of thirteen then rather than the woman old in thought and deed; the horrors of her position exercised for a while—for a very little while—a salutary effect.

"I thocht that if I e'er got awa frae the place, I would na thieve ony mair. I would keep to the factory, and try to live honest," was her remark at this portion of her history.

But this impression did not last the night out, nor the first hour of her incarceration. Becoming used to the cell, she found the place was not wholly dark, and that the large trap which remained open in the door allowed a glimmer of light into the cell from the gas jet burning in the corridor. She could just make out her company also,—five or six women, either drunk or defiant, crouched on the floor, or lying on the slanting wooden boards which constituted a hard bed for those disposed to assume a recumbent position. The key had not turned upon her, ere woman's curiosity asserted itself.

"What are ye in for?" asked the soberest of

the party, against whom Jane Cameron found herself standing.

"Stealing, they say," was the reply.

"Where?"

"In the Salt-market."

"Na wi' Mary Loggie?"

"Yes, it is."

"Mary, Mary, they've got your pal here!"

Mary Loggie, already an inmate of the police cell, lying on the slanting board fast asleep with her face to the wall, roused herself at this adjuration, and sat up rubbing her eyes.

"What is it?'

"Oh! Mary, is that ye?" cried Jane, glad to find a friend, and to hear a friendly voice in this new estate of hers.

"Yes, it's *me*. So they've caught ye?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's our luck. We canna help it, Jennie."

"What will they do to us? what will they do to us?"

"Hang the couple o' ye," remarked an old crone of a humorous turn of mind; an assertion which curdled Jane's blood, although aware of

the exaggeration. Mary Loggie laughed wildly at this—screamed with laughter.

"I dinna see anythin' to laugh at," reproved Jane.

"Ye're afraid of the prison," said Mary: "pooh, prison's naęthin'; they gie ye a clean "hoose," and somethin' to eat; and the oakum pickin's easy after a weel."

"How long a sentence will it be, Mary?"

"How long will they gie us?" asked Mary of the assembled company.

The question was deliberated by the sober portion. So far as regarded information respecting the term of sentence, it was fortunate that there was an old hand in "durance vile" that evening, a woman who expected to go before the sheriffs instead of the bailie,* and get her twelvemonths perhaps — a woman whom experience had rendered well up in the law.

This woman listened to the facts of the case, related in a very frank and straightforward

* The bailies of the Scotch police courts, holding a position somewhat similar to our police magistrates, only adjudicate upon offences punishable by a sentence not exceeding sixty days' imprisonment.

manner by Mary Loggie, and then expressed her sentiments upon the matter.

"It depends whether Bailie Gilmour or Bailie Gourlay tries ye, a wee bit; ye'll get mair hard labour frae ane than the tither p'raps. Ye'll hae your sixty days, if ye dinna get passed on to the Sheriffs like me, Mary, and your pal will hae ten or twenty days, as it's a first start aff. Hech, I wish it was *my* first."

A discussion ensued upon this assertion of the referee. The old woman who had talked of hanging ventured to differ, and some quarrelling immediately ensued, which the turnkey tried to stop by shouting innumerable threats through the open trap.

The angry waves of discussion were appeased after a while. Fresh arrivals changed the subject of discourse; more female thieves, more drunken women, were turned in, till the place resembled a Black Hole, and even Jane Cameron, accustomed to crowded society, gasped for breath here. Still the society of these people took away the sense of horror at her position; everybody there made a jest of it; many told some laughable

anecdotes of their former experience: one woman congratulated herself on a chance of getting to gaol again; another broke into a ribald song, that set the rest laughing and joining in chorus till the uproar became unbearable; and the turnkey, after a second remonstrance, banged the trap to, and shut out the little air and light that had filtered through there.

When it was just possible to distinguish daylight through the cracks of the great wooden screen nailed before the window above their heads, most of these caged women dropped off to sleep, and Jane tried to imitate their example, but did not succeed well. They were all asleep after a while, and Cameron had fallen into a troubled doze, when she was awakened by the bread and water being served in through the trap. The majority availed themselves of this governmental attention. There were some hours to ensue before their examination was likely to occur, and bread and water were better than nothing, under the circumstances. The time stole on; some of the drunken women who had slept themselves sober, and whose cases were of a

trivial character, not worth intruding upon the attention of the bailie or the procurator-fiscal, were allowed egress from the cells, and dismissed to their homes with a caution. As the day wore on, there was much tramping up and down the wards by the heavily-shod officials, much locking and unlocking of doors; finally, periodical visits from policemen, who called through the trap the names of the parties whose turn had come to face the law.

Jane Cameron thrilled at every sound now; she was still nervous, and unaccustomed to the new position of things; and although she felt there was nothing to grieve about, yet she was far from calm; and Mary Loggie's stoicism was enviable and unapproachable.

"Ye are takin' it coolly, Mary," Jane could not refrain from remarking.

"Just now."

This answer was explained when they were at last called to the police court, when Jane Cameron, her knees knocking together with nervous trepidation, went with Mary Loggie along the corridors, in charge of a police officer, into

the great court on the first floor of the Central Police Station. Jane cast a timid look round, and then followed Mary to the part allotted for offenders on the right hand of the bailie's table.

The large court-room, the presence of those who were to decide her fate at the table before her, the procurator-fiscal or public prosecutor facing her, the number of people in the court, the policemen hanging about the doors, the Glasgow public, represented by thirty or forty friends of various offenders whose cases were to be heard that morning, sitting one above the other on raised seats at the extremity of the room—seriously impressed Jane Cameron. In all her after-life, for offences of a more serious nature, for cases which she knew must shut her from the world for a long period, she acknowledges to have never experienced such a feeling of horror and heart-sickness as on that day when she first faced the Scotch magistrates as a prisoner charged with theft. Mary Loggie began to cry and protest her innocence at the top of her voice—to lay all the blame on the young

man who had enticed her in to drink—to deny all knowledge of Jane Cameron, and utter at the top of her voice a hundred falsehoods and lamentations, till warned of her breach of decorum in the court. Jane struggled with her feelings, and tried to assume a dignified composure, which broke down upon perceiving, amongst the audience at the end of the room, John Ewan and Loggie's sisters, absorbed in every word of the case which was being stated to the bailie. Jane cried and choked and sobbed then; it was all very awful and impressive—what *was* to become of her!

The case occupied some time. There were many witnesses to call: the foolish young man who had been robbed, the landlord of the whiskey-shop, the policeman who had taken Mary Loggie in charge, the detectives who had apprehended Jane Cameron, &c. The case was very plain—Jane's identity was sworn to, and Jane's sudden outburst of denial disbelieved.

"Does anyone know these girls—have they been here before?" asked the bailie. The police bore testimony to a knowledge of them both. Mary Loggie's previous conviction was alluded

to—Jane Cameron was alleged to be "going bad," to be always associating with the worst characters in Glasgow. Still, it was a first offence; Cameron was only a child in appearance after all—her age seemed to tell in her favour—the facts of the case appeared to point to Mary Loggie as the thief, and Jane as simply her accomplice; and Jane being at work in a cotton-mill was another feature in the case which had its advantages for her at last.

The bailie passed sentence—Mary Loggie sixty days' imprisonment with hard labour, and Jane Cameron twenty days. Jane Cameron was recommended to give up all evil associates, and keep to cotton-spinning for the future; the prisoners were removed, and the next case was called for hearing. One little wave from the great sea of crime had rolled to land here—how many waves since then have followed one another in swift and uninterrupted succession, each so like the last, and yet each evidence of an immortal soul passing away—perhaps for ever—from all that is right and lawful in the sight of God!

CHAPTER X.

GLASGOW PRISON.

THE same day witnessed Jane Cameron's entry into Glasgow Prison. At that period the extensive alterations resolved upon, in the building of the new wing for the reception of the male convicts, were not completed. The accommodation for prisoners was limited at that period, and there was considerable difficulty in carrying out the principles of the separate system—the main difference in the Scotch treatment of prisoners to that of the English and Irish.

The treatment of convicts in the jails of Edinburgh and Glasgow is distinct from that of the treatment at Perth General Prison. After long and anxious consideration of the matter, I am

inclined to consider the Edinburgh and Glasgow principle right; and the Perth, even the English and Irish system, wrong. It seems hard and cruel to deny all association to prisoners, more especially to those whose sentences are to extend over a long period of years; but association of prisoners *has* worked ill, and will continue to work ill, whilst so little care is exercised as to the characters of women classed together—perhaps whilst they remain classed under any circumstances. It is not possible to assert what advantage can arise from the contact of two *unhealthy* minds; but it is easy to guess what danger is likely to evolve from it. The monotony of prison-life is relieved in the latter case, it is true; but is not that monotony one of the chief determents to a convict?

It was lately suggested to the writer of this work by a prison governor—a gentleman whose experience of prisoners and prison management extends over a considerable number of years—that the principle of placing a *healthy* mind in contact with an unhealthy had never yet been fairly tried, and was, in his opinion, the one method to do good, and work a lasting reforma-

tion. I believe this is an approximation to the great secret of managing well our convict population. I believe that this principle, fairly tried, would produce results scarcely dreamt of yet by the stoutest supporters of pet theories.

There is no difficulty in the way of testing the method: more, there is but little expense attached to the experiment.

Let us suppose a small model prison conducted on this principle—on the strict principle of keeping apart the female convicts in their cells, in the airing-ground, at all hours of the night and day. There is no collusion between the prisoners; there are no stories told of great success in crime; no advice given as to the best methods of excelling in their business; no comparing notes, and strengthening each other for the future in the bad resolves which have shut them thus apart from the world. In association at Perth, in Ireland, at Brixton, Parkhurst, and other prisons, this is the staple and natural subject of discourse; and evil must evolve from it, despite the good intentions with which they profess to depart when the ticket-of-leave is granted. In our model prison this is

done away with, let us suppose, and the following principle substituted. Once a day, the Scripture-reader, or a matron chosen from a numerous body of well-conducted, well-educated women, acts as *associate* to the prisoner; spends an hour with her in her cell, if she be a prisoner to be trusted—that is, a woman who has already passed a certain number of months of strict "solitary," by way of probation. This relieves the monotony of the cellular system, and introduces the poor ignorant convict—whose crime is a disease foisted upon her by neglect—to an intelligent, thoughtful companion, who talks of a new world to her, of the advantages of honesty and sobriety, but who, be it understood, is not always preaching, or expected "to talk good" at all times and seasons, and weary the easily-tired auditor. She is the companion for the nonce, to discourse with her on any subject which she may consider most fitting to the occasion; to read to her from the book of history, travel, or high-class fiction, which appertains to this prison library. Am I wrong in supposing, for this imaginary prisoner, a change in her thoughts and character, in many instances a great

and lasting reformation? I base this theory on my knowledge of what a prisoner is; what a little touches her heart; what power a *thoughtful matron* can exercise over an unruly prisoner; and, above all, what children of a large growth, open with their all-viciousness to a good impression, these female convicts are.

At Glasgow and Edinburgh Prisons this system may be said to be existent "in the rough," and the prisoners, as a rule, are well-behaved. The separate system is carried out to the best of the governors' power, wherever there is sufficient room in the gaol for the purpose; which, however, is not often.

Matters were worse when Jane Cameron added one more to the list of unfortunates condemned to spend a portion of their existence in Glasgow Gaol. The prison was very full at her period of arrival: not one-half of the whole body of prisoners were then undergoing the separate system; two, and even three in a cell, were to be found in the Bridewell—that is, the old part of the prison, used exclusively for female convicts. The prison was full, and the prisoners were hard at work

when Jane Cameron arrived — close on three hundred female prisoners, on whom sentence had been passed, and over a score of women waiting trial before the sheriff, or in the High Court of Justiciary. Men and women, against whom the charge is of too grave a nature to be settled by a bailie of the city, are sent to the chief prisons at once, there to await their time of trial. They are not subjected, of course, to the discipline of the prison; the diet is different; they are not compelled to work; and their friends are allowed to see them twice a-week.

Jane Cameron, after being subjected to the process of a bath, and even carefully weighed, was sent at once to the Bridewell, and placed in temporary association—owing to the crowded state of the prison—with a middle-aged female convict of delicate health, who was employed at the time on knitting. Varieties of occupation were in force at this time amongst the female convicts: there were oakum-pickers and teazers, menders and darners, veiners and winders, hair and cotton teazers, needlewomen, washerwomen, kitchen-women, women employed at force-pump work, and, I

believe, weavers. The self-supporting system here, as elsewhere: prison-labour competing with free-labour beyond there in the closes, where there was rent to pay, fire, food, and candles to buy.

In my first work I protested against this system with all the little power I possessed. At one period I indulged the bright hope, buoyed up by the able manner in which the press supported my protest, that this system would die out, or be subjected to some amelioration; but the needle-women, alas! still starve in their honesty, or plunge to ruin in despair of earning enough money to keep home together. Contracts are still made with those city firms which are wise enough to seek the cheapest market, no matter where, or whose lives and morals their policy affects. They are encouraged by our Government, our prison directors; and it is not for the men of trade to have a higher standard of morality than those who talk so much about the comfort, well-being, and moral progress of our criminals. I wonder did the tragedy of March 15th, 1863, strike home to any of those theorists who support this obnoxious policy?

Did the woman making shirts for five farthings a-piece, and dying over them—propped up in bed, and dying and sewing together!—strike home to any fine gentleman anxious to keep down the expenses of prison government? Did he think of the dreadful competition which crime was carrying on with those who fought against it, or of the many who die, like unto that poor woman, in the *mêlée*, and whose sad histories are not chronicled in the newspapers of the day? Did he think?—*will he think*?—that he may stand answerable some day for a part of the evil which by his means is born into the world? So much a-year saved from prison expenses on the one hand; but how many hurrying to crime, and making for the prison gates, to be fed and clothed at the expense of Government, on the other? Men of thought—men of God—men who are at the head of the state, and have power to effect a change, will you not think of this?—have you not the courage or the heart to work this great amendment?

Jane Cameron had much to wonder at in the prison world of which she had become a denizen.

A cleaner, more comfortable, and better-ventilated home for her than Loggie's house in the close, or her mother's place in the New Vennel. Plenty of room to breathe in, a bed to herself, warm and comfortable clothing, such as she would have been always glad of; a full blue stripe jacket, and a skirt of warm blue serge; shoes and stockings for the feet that had so long run naked on the Glasgow pavement—by necessity once, occasionally by choice, and since then for a purpose or a disguise.

Here in the prison Jane dropped into the regular routine of the establishment; spent twenty days, Sundays exclusive, in rising early, working persistently, living by rule, seeing the Scripture-reader, being taught her alphabet, hearing good advice from the lips of the first good man who had ever addressed her, and for the first time being told by the chaplain of the commandments she had broken, and warned of the danger which was threatening her soul. What would have been the effect of this good counsel under different circumstances, at her age, upon a nature that many years later was found susceptible of

impression, I will not attempt to guess. Even in prison she met with another evil counsellor, and the good seed fell among thorns, and was choked in its growth. I will speak further of this a few pages hence. Now, as a companion sketch to female life in English prisons, perhaps female life in Glasgow Gaol may not be considered uninteresting.

The experience of Jane Cameron, with a little alteration here and there, is the experience of every female convict who passes from our Scotch local prisons to the Perth Penitentiary. Since Jane Cameron's time the alterations have not been many; at Glasgow, for instance, I believe there have been but few variations with regard to diet, and the prison rules almost in every instance remain the same. They have worked well on the whole, and time has not disturbed them.

The Bridewell of Glasgow Prison is in the centre of the building, and detached from the male portion: it is the oldest part of the prison, was built before prison architecture became an elaborate study, and there is consequently con-

siderable room for improvement; but the way in which the best has been made of the defects, and the manner in which, at the present time, the Glasgow Bridewell is conducted, reflects infinite credit upon its present governor, Mr. J. Stirling, and on its estimable matron, Mrs. Watson. Let me add, that the proportion of female warders to prisoners * is also greater than at our English prisons, and that the proportion of well-conducted prisoners to unruly ones is thus greater in consequence.

The prisoners at Glasgow rise at six in the morning, arrange their cell, and work till eight (or half-past, I am uncertain which), at which time breakfast, the first meal of the day, is served through the large traps in the cell doors. The dietary is not the same throughout the prison, long-sentenced women being supplied with a larger amount of food than those serving their ten, twenty, thirty, or sixty days; but all prisoners, both male and female, are not lavishly sup-

* In Scotch prisons, the lady holding the rank of superintendent in England is termed matron, whilst female warders correspond with our own prison matrons.

plied with food, and do not fare so well as the inmates of our London prisons. The porridge, which is the breakfast, and a disagreeable substitute for our English cocoa, is served out in little wooden troughs ribbed with iron, long-sentenced women receiving six ounces of that slabby mixture, or in liquid quantity about a quart—more than, under any circumstances, I, who am not a Scotchwoman, could possibly get through myself. No bread is given with this meal; but at dinner, after four or five hours' work—*and the work must be half done, or the dinner is not forthcoming*—a six, eight, or twelve-ounce loaf, according to the woman's sentence, is given with the soup, which is made of ox-head, and is savoury and good, as it need be, no meat being allowed to Glasgow or Edinburgh convicts. Now and then, by way of variation, bread and cheese are served out in lieu of soup, and doubtless relished for a change. The third meal consists of porridge again, or gruel, served to those who have completed their day's task; and that is the dietary on which prisoners thrive and increase in weight, and

against which, I trust, there is to issue no complaint! There is, at least, no pampering of our Scotch convicts at the local prisons. At Perth the dietary more closely resembles our English scale; but at Perth are assembled all the long-sentenced women, and it requires something more to sustain them through the long melancholy years of penal servitude. After work-hours the women are allowed time to read in their cells for a little while before the gas is turned out, and the women, tired and weary, seek their rest.

The variation to this labour is an hour's exercise a-day—exercise also in solitary. In one portion of the grounds is built a circular kind of structure, from the centre of which radiate a number of separate airing-cells, open in front and at the top to air and light, and crossed by iron bars. If the reader imagine a huge coach-wheel, and each space between the spokes a separate airing-cell paved with stones, and in each space a figure in a prison dress, flitting to and fro, to and fro, like a spirit tormented by unrest, whilst above all, and looking down on

all from a raised observatory in the centre, is the officer on duty, he will form an idea of the airing-"grounds" of Glasgow Prison. The men exercise here at one portion of the day, the women at another; and it is a strange, heart-depressing sight to see these erring souls pacing up and down in wild-beast fashion, thinking of the past which has brought them to this, or of the future wherein it will be all left behind, and resting not for a moment until the exercise hour is at an end.

There is a chapel for the male prisoners, each prisoner being barred in from his fellow-convicts; but the women hear divine service in their cells—a principle which might be easily rectified, and would be of greater benefit to the women. The prisoners are prayed and preached to from a distance, and in two wards at a time; the chaplain taking his stand on the stairs between an upper and lower ward, and the doors of the cells being left ajar and secured only by a chain. This is a strange and somewhat irreverent method of conducting divine service; and I am doubtful if the prisoners at the extremities of the

ward can hear very distinctly, although I am assured to the contrary, and have no grounds for my doubts.

The service is that of the Church of Scotland, and no Roman Catholic priests at the time I write are allowed the *entrée* of the prisons, unless sent for on special occasions. The Roman Catholic prisoners do not take the restriction to heart, and attend the Protestant form of worship with singular complacency and unanimity. Only two women, in a long course of years, have been known to decline attendance at the regular services. There are no gratuities or regular mode of pay for work done as at the English prisons; a woman, on leaving, is presented with a small sum, the amount of which is left to the governor's discretion. Neither Edinburgh nor Glasgow is a long-service prison—a woman is not supposed to remain a longer period than ten or twelve months. This was a rule "more honoured in the breach than the observance" in the old days before the General Prison at Perth assumed such gigantic and magnific proportions.

To those old days when Jane Cameron was

prisoner there, and Captain Mullen was governor—when Glasgow Prison was overcrowded, and the new wing for male convicts had not attained completion—let us turn again.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TWENTY DAYS.

THIS history would not have been written had Jane Cameron been passed to a reformatory in lieu of a prison. Many lives would have known a different and less sad termination had children younger even than the girl whose life I am attempting been more frequently spared the contaminating influence of a gaol. A child of *any age* was, probably still is, liable to the criminal law of Scotland. A child of eighteen months was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, along with its guilty mother, some years ago—the child being registered in the prison books as a convicted thief for life!

For a career begun so early as Jane Cameron's,

the marvel is that she should have escaped so long. Children several years her junior found admittance to the prison very frequently, and it was even a late time for the girl to begin to experience the effects of prison discipline. Had the prison been less full at this period—had Jane Cameron been placed alone, or even with a less designing, hypocritical woman than the one with whom she was doomed to associate, the chaplain's words might have had their proper effect, as I have already remarked in the preceding chapter.

This woman was a Glasgow thief—from the New Vennel, as it afterwards appeared—a crafty, hypocritical prisoner, who made great professions of amendment, and was even supposed at that time to be penitent for her many sins. Possibly it was thought that the grave-faced woman, ostensibly awaking to a sense of the error of her ways, would be a fitting companion for Jane Cameron, and teach a moral after a fashion. Necessity compelled an associate at the period, and Jane's companion was a woman whom we will call Elizabeth Harber.

This woman took but little notice of our juvenile prisoner for the first day; on the second, after the governor had visited the cell and made some general remarks, she whispered—

"You needn't mind that man. He's a bad 'un."

Jane looked surprised at this sweeping criticism upon one who had impressed her, and whose visit had cast her into as much trepidation as though it had been a royal one.

"He's a fine 'un to talk, my dear," said this prisoner; "but it's easy to talk when one has got a coat on his back, a large house to live in, and goodness knows how many thousands a-year to take care of us trodden-down critturs."

Prisoners have always exaggerated ideas of the salaries of prison officers.

"You'll have the parson here soon, and you'll hear how he'll go on about your sins and your ignorance. He's the worst character in the prison, my dear."

And this woman proceeded deliberately and systematically to lie away the character of a good man, to invent a series of fabrications concerning him, which Jane Cameron believed.

Hence, there was no good done to this unregenerate soul, waiting its chance of redemption and baffled by cruel circumstances. The chaplain of the prison came. The old woman received him with every evidence of respect and deep humility, feigned an interest in all his questions and remarks to Jane, sighing with a profundity that implied how she felt the force of them also.

"My poor child, you appear to know nothing—to have never known good from evil," was one of the chaplain's remarks.

"She's just like an animal, sir," Elizabeth Harber ventured to break in with. "I've been trying to make her understand a bit myself about the Bible, but she only stares."

The clergyman did his best, the old woman her worst; and the woman—or the devil, who prompted her—got the best of the battle.

The reverential curtsey which she adopted upon the departure of the chaplain was followed by a wry face and a spring at the door as it was closed after him, the latter performance making Jane laugh.

"He's paid to talk all this stuff," she whispered; "if he wasn't paid, he wouldn't a come nigh us. It's as well to be ceevil to 'em all; but I hate the lot: they're bad uns."

Every one was a "bad un." She demolished the characters of the matron, the female warders, the surgeon, the head warder, and the governor, who occasionally came round with visitors. She was a woman grateful for nothing. She had spent a long life in crime, beginning at even an earlier age than little Cameron; and when the opportunity presented, she amused her several companions with recitals of the success she had had in the profession, and the money she had made and spent.

"Always pertend, my dear, to be growing good," was her advice to Jane; "they think so much more of you; and it's so much better than being obstrepolous, and getting bread and water and handcuffs, and being shut in the dark cell across the yard. And always be as delicate and sickly as you can, and make yourself so if you can get a chance; because you don't come in for the oakum-pickin', or that nasty crank-machine

they've got here. They tried hard labour with me, but my health wouldn't stand it!"

Words such as these—words akin to these—were whispered all day long by this old woman, who was fond of talking; and Jane Cameron saw hypocrisy and evil everywhere.

The prison did not terrify her now; the discipline was not particularly severe; the dry oakum-picking for a portion of every day was tedious, and made her fingers ache, but she was a quick girl, and rapidly improved at it; the cell was comfortable; she was not even in solitary; and if the food were on the lowest scale—she being a "short-sentenced *woman*"—and she could have eaten more very often, that was to be reckoned amongst the minor ills of life to which her incarceration had reduced her.

In the airing-cell, pacing up and down, or standing underneath the little slanting board which kept her from the wet when the rain came on, she had leisure to think, not of her sins, although they would trouble her a little, but of John Ewan; of Mary Loggie, a prisoner in the same gaol, but whom she never met; and of the

life in store for her when her twenty days were over.

She had promised the chaplain to amend, to keep to the cotton-spinning, and shun all bad associates from the day she gained her liberty; but it was a promise which intended nothing more than to deceive the minister, who was hopeful of her, she being young and apparently impressionable. She would never be a prisoner again, she thought. She did not like prison, although it was a better place than her home; for she loved her liberty, the run of the streets, the evil companions with whom her life had been passed, and by whose bad example she was going farther and farther away from hope of salvation every day.

Jane became strangely dull after the first ten days of her imprisonment. The monotony of prison routine was depressing and horrible. To a girl accustomed to run wild, this restraint to which she was subjected preyed upon her, even affected her health somewhat, robbed her of her appetite, and stole away the colour from her cheeks. When Harber told her one day that she

was looking ill and ugly, she burst into tears. The assertion alarmed her; she had begun to be vain of her good looks, and she thought if they deserted her she would lose "Cannie Jock," and mar all her prospects in life.

"I am sae tired o' this place," she confessed.

"Ah," grunted the old woman, "you'll have to bear it again and again."

"I'll take care another time."

The old woman made the most doleful prophecies, although she offered her what she considered the best advice. She understood everything connected with criminal life, did Mrs. Harber; she knew everybody in Glasgow—those who were lucky enough to be generally free, those who were unlucky enough to be always getting into trouble. She knew the Loggies, and warned Jane of the senior members, who were sneaking, grasping people that robbed their own set, and often curried favour with the police by betraying them. She had known Jane's mother, who was a poor whiskey-drinking fool; and Jane's father, who was an artful customer, and never stopped long in one place—that was a weakness which

had been her own ruin, she whispered. She knew "Cannie Jock," and remembered Cannie Jock's brother before he was transported for fourteen years—neither of them was worth his salt, and the sooner Jane gave the first "the go-by" the better for her. She only wished that Jane was old enough to be her companion, as they were going out of prison within a few days of each other; and she offered Jane the address of a young friend of hers in the Bridge-gate who was "just Jane's sort," and likely to be of service to her.

Elizabeth Harber would whisper away half the night, and keep Jane awake against her will—Jane, who was heartily tired of her and her maunderings. She thought that she would have preferred a cell to herself in preference to this woman's company, and considered it an extra punishment to be so constantly bored by her loquaciousness.

Elizabeth Harber's tongue was never still, and as she slept badly, Jane suffered in consequence. Jane would drop off to sleep with the woman whispering huskily from her bed in the opposite

corner, and wake up hours afterwards to hear her still muttering lugubriously in the darkness.

"I thocht I should hae liked solitary muckle better than that woman's gabble," she said, in allusion to this anecdote; "but I didna ken what solitary was like then."

Jane Cameron preferred the visits of the Scripture-reader to all other official visits.

"She was a kind lassie, and I should hae luved her, and she would hae dune me gude, if it hadna been for Harber's lees aboot her."

Harber would not allow that there was a scrap of goodness in the world—everything was done because it was paid for—no one in the world was better than his fellow-men. This was consolatory teaching to Jane Cameron, reconciled her to her position in life, and strengthened her in all ill resolves. It was satisfactory to hear, even from Elizabeth Harber, that she was no worse than other people, that other people in her position, brought up as she had been, and exposed to the same temptations, would have come, like her, to inevitable harm. The chaplain had told her some horrible tales about punishment for sin;

tales that made her hold her breath with affright, till the evil woman at her elbow assured her that they were not true—that the Bible which he preached from was not true—that there was nothing to fear—and that following his advice was an impossibility.

"We must live," commented Harber. "If people will see us starve rather than give us money, why, we must help ourselves. If anybody would give you and me a hundred a-year and a house to live in, why, we should be honest people, and go to church every Sunday. We ain't good characters, so we must starve or steal. I shall steal, for one!"

So the twenty days passed, and Jane Cameron's first experience of prison life was terrible enough, and brought about no reformation. She went out of the gaol making many promises, and thinking not of them for one instant after she was left free to pursue her way in that world, which she thought made to be preyed upon by her and her class. She went direct to the Loggies', where she was well received, and where a hundred questions were put to her as to prison

life, and how she fared, and whom she saw in Glasgow Gaol. Mary was inquired for; but Jane could afford no information. And Jane asked in her turn if any one knew what had become of Jock Ewan; and no one knew or cared.

"He dinna belang to us — he thinks he kens too muckle for us," said old Loggie, with whom "Cannie Jock" was no favourite. Jane, however, felt that half the joys of liberty were lost without this scamp, and went wandering about the streets in search of him. The close in which she had been apprehended was visited, but Ewan had changed his lodgings once more; the friends she met in the streets, and who were surprised to see her out again—time flying so fast with the free! — gave her but little consolation, and now and then wrung her heart with jealousy; he was "on" with the Frazer girls again, they thought — at least, he was always with them now; but perhaps it was merely to keep his spirits up while Jennie was "in quod." He was about Glasgow; some one had seen him last night; Jennie doubtless would run across him soon enough.

Half indignant, half sorrowful, this part child

part woman returned to the Loggies', and remained there, sullen and thoughtful, for the rest of the night. If Ewan wanted her he would know the day of her release and come after her, she said; a remark in which Loggie coincided. During the night Loggie settled money matters with Jane, and Jane took her share of the wages of sin, her fair share of the money stolen from the tourist in the Salt-market whiskey-shop.

Jane was a good-tempered girl in her way, and easily flattered into anything. When old faces were round her it was like home again, and it was thought that it would be but handsome on her part to stand glasses round in commemoration of her liberty, and of the sovereign or two which Loggie had taken care of for her. So she stood glasses round; and there was a great deal of drinking and laughing, of swearing and obscenity, in Loggie's close after that. They made fun of Cameron's attachment to John Ewan, who was a favourite with no one but Jane, and recommended her to throw him over and get a better man at once. And Jane sat and laughed and cried and drank whiskey in the midst of the motley tribe

who surrounded her, went mad over the drink with which they plied her, and spent nearly all her money on the knaves who called her friend; and then raved about Jock Ewan, and how she didn't care a rap for him, and could get on better, fifty thousand times better, without him.

This was the second estate worse than the first, and the good words of the chaplain were far-away echoes now: from that hour she thought no more about them. Why John Ewan had tired of her, and behaved ungratefully to her, was a matter of far greater concern even at that hour, with the whiskey driving her wild, and leading her tongue to cry out against him. This is the life, horrible and revolting, not alone of Jane Cameron or John Ewan, but of some two hundred and forty thousand juvenile offenders against God and man who are being trained to crime *professionally* in the towns and cities of the United Kingdom.*

Two hundred and forty thousand juvenile thieves!—of volunteers in the devil's service.

* It was estimated *some years since* that the number of juvenile thieves was in excess of 240,000. I fear that there has been no decrease in this frightful army.

What can become of them? What will become of these appalling numbers?—who is to reform them, preach to them, turn them from their evil practices, strike at the evil which is born with them, and which has taken deep root before the first effort is made to lead them to repentance?

Is there not need to be ever stirring in the good cause, ever watchful of these myriads, who increase rather than decrease, whose slowness to accept a good impression is awfully contrasted by the rapidity with which a bad one is received?

The army of workers in God's cause against them is not small; will it attack their homes more often—their crowded, sin-haunted homes, where poverty and ignorance are such deadly antagonists against it?

CHAPTER XII.

MAKING IT UP WITH JOHN EWAN.

JANE CAMERON awoke the next day with a racking headache and a sense of despondency, partly attributable to whiskey-drinking, partly to John Ewan's desertion of her.

She did not know what to think of this John Ewan; she would have sacrificed all she had in the world to have a long talk with him and give him a bit of her mind—her full and energetic opinion of his treatment of her.

"I wouldn't let any man serve me like that," said an elder sister of the captive Mary to Jane; "I'd pay him out, if I waited a lifetime for it. I'd split upon him when he least expected it, and get him locked up for a year or two."

Cameron had not thought of revenge before, but the suggestion was not forgotten—in the days ahead of her, the days still more dark and still more impenetrable to light, she thought of this as a retaliation for a wrong. He deserved everything for behaving so shamefully to her, thought this girl, who had scarcely reached her thirteenth year. If he treated her like *that*, why should she shrink from turning upon him?

Still she was hopeful at the period that Jack Ewan was not very much to blame; she had only heard the story from Ewan's enemies—people to whom Ewan had always told her he objected. She resolved to spend all the next day in searching for him—in finding out the Frazers, for instance, and Ewan's "pals," those whose faces were familiar to her, and whom she had seen very often in company with this mysterious lover of hers.

In the evening John Ewan was discovered in the High Street. Full of her wrongs, Cameron rushed at him at once, and assailed him with a hundred reproaches for not thinking of her last night—for not coming to Loggies' after her.

Ewan professed to have made a mistake in his calculations—he took a very elaborate and awful oath to that effect—and Jane, somewhat pacified at this energetic denial on his part, condescended to listen to reason, and to allow him to explain matters. This strange pair walked up and down the High Street, explaining and arguing: there was a mystery about the Frazer girls, or about Ann Frazer in particular, which he did not satisfactorily elucidate, although he took sundry fresh oaths that Annie was a girl he didn't care "one ha'p'orth for," and that there was no occasion for Jane to be jealous about *her*.

They went into a whiskey-shop, where Jane stood treat, and made it up over two glasses of fire-water; then they went together to a "sing-song" that was being held that night down a close in the Bridge-gate—a "sing-song" for the benefit of a thief who had caught the typhus fever, and was therefore thrown out of work. The dark profession get up these benefits at times for favourite members of the fraternity, and the sum accumulated on behalf of the sick reprobate serves to keep the wolf from the door—that is,

the rent-man—for a few weeks. These "sing-songs" are like everything appertaining to the class of which I treat—obscene, immoral, revolting in the extreme. The door is locked against all strangers, the whiskey is produced in a stone jug from a secret receptacle, the fire is stirred if it be winter time, the gang cluster round it, the collection is made before all the money is spent, one man is chosen as chairman for the occasion, and no one is expected to refuse his contribution to the general entertainment.

Thieves, as a class, are very good singers—albeit their choice of subjects is far from select. The majority of songs are filthy enough, I am told, although "Hurrah for the Road," and "Dick Turpin," and sentimental songs, are indulged in by those young men who have tenor voices. At this "sing-song" Jane Cameron and John Ewan became the best of friends again, swore eternal fidelity, and made many promises and arrangements for the future.

It was settled that Jane should leave the Loggies at once, and that they should make an effort, if possible, to rent a "house" to them-

selves. Jane had money to pay a fortnight's rent in advance, and that was a good beginning at any time.

They began housekeeping then together—renting a small room at the top of a five-storied den in the Old Wynd, a place, notwithstanding the number of closes that have been pulled down by order of the Lord Dean of Guild, still full of fever-haunted lodging-houses of the lowest description. Thieves have a partiality for the Old Wynd still; it is narrow, dark, and intricate, and the closes are so thick on either side that it is difficult to follow a man, or guess into which cavernous interior he has plunged away from his pursuers.

Here these two lived, then, or tried to live—for the "luck" which they were always expecting did not make its appearance in any definite shape. Everybody seemed better off than they, doing better, and falling into better—that is, more fortunate—channels.

Before Jane Cameron went to Glasgow Prison she was unaware that she was doing wrong; now she remembered once or twice the chaplain's

words, but not with any spasm of contrition for the sad nature of her life. The parson was paid to tell everybody so, Elizabeth Harber had informed her; doubtless this was true enough, she thought, and sorry enough would the parson be if everybody followed his advice, and left his services no longer required—throwing *him* out of work, in fact!

The criminal class reasons in this fashion—convicted felons always stand their ground when pressed too much upon their past wickedness. "If it wasn't for us, where would the lot of ye be?" the female prisoner shrieks through the trap at her matron in the turbulent or sullen moods which afflict her at times.

It was a miserable, discontented life of theirs; Jane Cameron, with a "house" of her own, was not happy. These thieves are never happy, despite the money they obtain and the boast some of them make of being their own masters. They are always in fear of detection; they are generally penniless—for the money they have lightly gained is spent in the same fashion, and before the next guilty spoil is obtained

they are on the brink of starvation. A few days' feasting, drunkenness, and debauchery, and then once more in distress, and often reduced to the extremity of begging — thieving having become so flat, stale, and unprofitable.

"I canna remember that I ever had a clear happy day in a' my life," Jane Cameron said, many years later.

"Picking pockets, when you can find plenty of money, and can get to the plays, is a very happy life," was the assertion, however, of another thief, closely questioned by one of our prison governors.

But the "plenty of money" is not always forthcoming, and it is this grim hiatus in the career of crime which depresses the guilty one, and makes his lot wretched, ever bringing to the surface the wish that he had been an honest man, living soberly and steadily all his days.

Still amongst so great a body there are all conditions of thieves: there are thieves who even save money, bank it, and provide for the rainy day which is sure to come in its turn. But it may be said as a rule—and it is consolatory to assert it—that there is no life so utterly wretched, so full

of a false excitement that in its reaction preys upon the brain of the guilty one, as the life of a professional thief.

Jane Cameron found it necessary to take in lodgers to her "house"—her house of eight feet long by five wide—juvenile lodgers of her own class and character, whose mothers had turned them out of doors for being worse than themselves, perhaps. This "house" in the Old Wynd became well known to the police; a *marked house*, to be intruded upon very frequently whenever robberies or pilfering occurred which might be set down to the depredations of juvenile hands. Given a back door entered in the daytime by scaling a yard wall, an article snatched from a shop counter, a child robbed in the street by children not much older than itself, and Cannie Jock's house was the first to be intruded upon in search of evidence.

Cameron did not get back to the cotton-spinning. When hands are in request, characters are not looked into very closely, but Jane Cameron's character was over-bad, and by some means was now pretty generally known.

"They ca'ed me ane o' the warst characters in

Glasgie," she said, "afore I deserved it, when there were hundreds worse than mysel."

Jane Cameron was close on fourteen years of age, before she was a second time brought before the notice of the Glasgow bailies. In one sense of the word she and Ewan had at least been lucky in escaping the clutch of the police officers; Ewan in particular, who never picked pockets or entered a house without being quite certain of success. "He was over-cautious, and lost many good chances," his comrades asserted when summing up his merits and demerits; and this was probably a true criticism, for Ewan was of a timid nature as well as crafty, and objected strongly o prison life. He knew that his next sentence would be a long one, and that kept him wary of any felonious indiscretion.

Jane Cameron, remembering Glasgow Gaol, was equally careful, much to Ewan's dissatisfaction, who did not admire precaution in others. Precaution on both sides kept their pockets empty, and made the rent hard to pay; it was quite a struggle to live with this young couple.

All their earnings had been on a small scale

lately; a gown abstracted from a rag-shop door a purse stolen with only a few shillings in it petty pilferings which just kept them from starvation, and rendered John Ewan morose and discontented. In prosperity this youth was passable company, in adversity a demon; but in all cases an ungrateful scamp, with selfishness highly developed.

"I ha' aften wandered what I fancied him for," Cameron said; "he was a sneak; he did na care for me, he went aften wi' ither girls; naebody liked Jock Ewan 'cept mysel."

Jane Cameron was mourning over the decadence of this affection when she was fourteen years of age; it was the source of many quarrels between them, ending in blows sometimes, for Jock Ewan was free with his fists when his blood was up, and exercised no gallantry towards the fair sex.

Jane Cameron bore his blows and remained true to him; obeyed his orders, stole for him; walked the streets at night in search of dupes for him, did her best or her worst, and failed to please him. From all her accounts it is easy to see that this lad was a tyrant and coward;

that every side of his character was despicable and mean, which is a harsh criticism to pass even upon a professional thief.

Once during the year which we have cursorily noted, Jane was in great trouble, for he was arrested on suspicion of being concerned in a theft of wearing apparel; but the case failed for want of evidence, and Johnnie Ewan was dismissed, whilst his accomplices in that case went to Glasgow Gaol. After that, and when Jane was over fourteen years of age, she fell "into trouble" once more, as we have already remarked.

The trouble was through Ewan, who taunted her with doing nothing to keep house, who threatened to leave her to shift for herself if she got so lazy and flung all the work upon him, who was extra hard upon her, the fire being out, the cupboard empty, and money preternaturally scarce. She was driven out of the Old Wynd to earn money in some fashion, and she made an attempt at pocket-picking in Argyle Street, was discovered and carried off to the station-house.

This was her second offence against the law, and Bailie G—— committed her to Glasgow

Gaol for sixty days with hard labour. Mary Loggie, with whom she was still intimate, attended the examination in the court, but John Ewan did not appear this time.

Mary Loggie looked sadly after Cameron when the sentence was passed; she remembered her own sixty days, and felt for her friend. Between this girl and Jane Cameron there really existed a friendship, almost a love for each other. Jane's departure from the Loggie household had not weakened it.

Such friendships are not rare between female thieves. In the midst of much that is foul, false and unwomanly, there are existent affections which would not put to the blush people who are no like unto these poor sinners.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SEPARATE SYSTEM.

WHEN Jane Cameron returned to Glasgow Gaol, she was placed in a separate cell. The prison was still over-full, the new wing was not completed, and officials were still praying for more space. Still Jane Cameron was favoured with a separate cell, which she thought would be a change, having a lively remembrance of Mrs. Harber's loquacity. For the first day of her incarceration it *was* a change; the solitude was pleasant after the stir and bustle of the Wynd; the clean, neat cell, with its rules, regulations, and its Scripture texts upon the walls, contrasted favourably with the stifling precincts of that room, smaller than the cell which was to

be her home for sixty days. She had left Jock Ewan in anger, and there was a morbid satisfaction in fancying that he would be sorry for it now, and in imagining his discomfort at the separation. But on the second day these thoughts took a turn. The consciousness of being away from him, and isolated from the world for sixty days, began to disturb her. What would he do? With whom would he consort during the long separation? He would find some one else — one of those Frazers — and throw her off: she was sure of it. And then what was to become of her?

She thought of Ewan as her one hope and comfort in the world, instead of the one heavy stone that had been hung round her neck to sink her deeper and deeper into guilt.

The separate system had its effect on Jane Cameron. There was much time to think over her oakum-picking, and in her practice at the crank, to which she was set for a time, until the doctor suddenly stopped it, after asking her several questions which startled her — which added a new element to her future,

and opened forth a new light that "dazed" her.

She had had her suspicions before; but Dr. G—— confirmed them. In six months she would be a mother!

This was a revelation at which she did not know whether to laugh or cry. The doctor had muttered "Poor child! poor child!" as though it were something to weep over; and then the door closed upon her, and she was left to pick the hard lumps of rope, and think of it all, and wonder what difference it would make.

There was a well of deep feeling inherent in this girl: in the latter days it was plainly evident. In the days of which I am writing now, it lay hidden; and the clergyman was the first to see that, had "things been different," Jane Cameron might have been a respectable woman all her life.

Mr. R—— had better opportunities with Jane than during her last imprisonment. There was no evil agent to turn all his words to ridicule directly his back was turned; and though he set to work on a nature that had had more than a

year's further hardening in a criminal world, he chanced to visit her at a time when her thoughts were disturbed, and she was far from happy. By degrees he learned all Cameron's history; from the doctor he heard the particulars of what lay before her in the future, and he expatiated on the facts with a kindness and gentleness that touched her.

He did not spare her fears; for to arouse the fears of those more hardened than the rest is not an unwise or a cruel process—anything to induce them to reflect upon an estate better and purer than their own. He asked her if she had ever thought of death, or what was to become of her after death. He spoke of her coming trial in a few months, and whether, if it pleased God to take her away at that time, she had ever considered the awful result of passing away unregenerate and defiant.

Jane Cameron listened horror-stricken. After he had left her, she thought that she should have gone mad. He had not left her before he had spoken of the mercy that is extended to sinners that repent, but he had awakened in her a con-

sciousness of the enormity of her sins, and she could not believe that there was any mercy to be hoped for. The dread of dying in childbirth blanched her cheeks and made her shudder with fright. She had never thought of facing death, or that it might come early, and leave her no time for reflecting upon what a wicked woman she had been.

She pined for the clergyman's next visit—that he might give her more hope, and take the load from her heart—that he might set her in the right way, from which, she thought, she would never depart again. The chaplain was absent the next day and the next; there were many duties to fulfil and many prisoners to visit, but the Scripture-reader was a good substitute, and, before the sixty days had expired, Jane Cameron learned to value her earnest teaching as highly as the chaplain's.

"At first I thocht she could na ken sae muckle as the gentleman who was there to pray and talk to us, but she was a gude young woman and comforted me mair. Gin I had been under sentence of transportation then, I should hae

wholly altered, I felt sae great a change, and sae sorry for a' my wickedness."

This is no common confession: the first meeting with good Christians, with earnest and God-fearing men and women, exercises a salutary effect; the ignorant and criminal are often bewildered by the new truths, and touched by the counsel that is proffered them. But the sentence is for a short while, and the prisoner goes back to the old haunts—there is no following each beyond the prison, when the temptation begins anew, and where each day the warning becomes weaker and weaker, dying away at last like a faint echo one may have heard in a dream. If there were a Prisoners' Aid Society outside every prison in the kingdom, what good might evolve, and what a number of souls be saved from destruction! If the care over the prisoner's regeneration could follow more frequently the first faltering steps from the prison gate, there would not be always the pressing need for new gaols, or a constant outcry for new systems.

Recommending a reformatory, a Magdalen, a refuge, is of little avail; the evil agent meets the

good impulse on its way, and thwarts it on the road to good.

It has been said, on official authority, that a reformatory on a large scale, and under Government control, would not succeed—such is the prisoners' antipathy to discipline and horror of any institution of a Government character. The prisoners would look upon it as another gaol foisted upon them when the liberty days came round to which they were entitled. The man or woman dead to all sense of shame and resolved to hurry on in the same wicked career would think so, but not those who have been impressed by good words, and depart in hope of the chance of turning to good in future. The feeling is transitory because the old life begins, the old companions return, directly the captive is free; but if there were at once a home for these Pariahs, where the moral teaching went on without the prison restraint, where government could assume a new character, and set aside that sternness and harshness without which prison obedience is incompatible, what would be the result?

I have seen as much of prison life as most

people; it has been my lot to mingle with all classes of female convicts, with the very worst of the worst class, and I do not hesitate to assert that a success undreamed of would follow the institution of a large and well-conducted Government reformatory. But it must begin from the beginning, with juvenile offenders especially—with those on whom no long course of crime has deadened every honest thought. It must not begin with Millbank and Brixton women—with women who have been sentenced half-a-dozen or more times, and to whom a prison has nothing terrible in it—it must be ever watchful for those who have sinned from ignorance and neglect, and who are affected by the light which good teachers have let in upon their darkened way. And a reformatory of this kind must be begun early, or even that effort will fail, and the next estate be worse than the present. It is a hard, but it is an incontrovertible fact, that the criminal world is hardening more and more—it is *ossifying*.

Our juvenile prisoners are more daring, more depraved, more dead to all sense of shame at their position than they have ever been.

The following remarks were made to the author's faithful aide-de-camp in his search for the truths connected with a portion of this story —a search in dark places, where no woman could have entered. The remarks are those of Superintendent List, of the Edinburgh constabulary, a gentleman whose experience of criminal life in England and Scotland extends over a long period of years, and whose skill and judgment at his present post have done so much for the proper organization of the force which he now so ably superintends:—

"I remember the time," Mr. List remarked, "when those *first* sentenced to prison would cry, go down on their knees, and wring their hands with horror at the thoughts of confinement in a gaol—when the very name of 'prison' would affright them. Now a juvenile prisoner receives his sentence with an unparalleled effrontery, and marches off to his cell perfectly unmoved by the shame or the terror of his position."

These juvenile prisoners have in the aggregate learned everything connected with the interior of

a gaol long before their entrance there. There is little to alarm them in the details; twenty, thirty, or sixty days' board and lodging for nothing; and then the old life, taking care to be a little more careful in "matters of business" next time!

One prisoner at Edinburgh Gaol, at his first incarceration, aroused almost a tumult in the ward by his indignant demands to see the governor. Where was the governor? he must see him at once. It was a matter of importance, and a business that must be immediately attended to. Would anybody be kind enough to call the governor to him on the instant? The governor, Mr. Smith—still the same able, energetic governor of Edinburgh Prison, I am happy to assert—being in the ward at the time, repaired to the prisoner's cell to learn the reason for his excitement and indignation.

"Look here, sir," was the explanation proffered, "I find that in my cell is marked up a list of the articles to which I am entitled here. I have gone over the list very carefully, and am one thing short; now I *demand to know* why I

' am not supplied with that article as well as the rest!"

This in an aggrieved tone and in an elevated voice—a guest at an hotel complaining to the landlord of the absence of a bootjack, or a square of Windsor in his soap-dish.

An amusing detail of prison life—a light thread woven in the dark texture, yet having its gloomy side also, when the coolness and hardness of the prisoner are taken into consideration. In the old times, afraid of the prison; in the new, tenacious of prison rights and privileges, and all sense of fear annulled for ever!

Jane Cameron, a figure from what I may term the old times, spent her sixty days in Glasgow Gaol, and went away promising to repent from that time forth—went away with a knowledge of God's laws, and how grievously she had offended against them.

How long the good thoughts remained with her, the next chapter will prove.

CHAPTER XIV.

JEALOUSY.

OUTSIDE in the streets Mary Loggie was waiting for her—waiting for her with all the news of what had happened in her absence, and concerning which Jane Cameron was naturally anxious.

She was glad to see Mary's face, to shake her by the hands, kiss her, and even cry a little at the sight of her.

"How pale ye hae got, Jeanie!" Mary remarked; "hae ye nae been weel?"

"Weel eno."

"I thocht I'd cam and wait for ye," said Mary.

"There's a gude lassie."

Jane Cameron had been given the address of the matron of an institute in Glasgow where it

was likely help might be afforded her, but the sight of Mary's appearance had disturbed her already; and the evidence of Mary having thought of her, had affected her a little. She thrust the address a little deeper into her pocket, and asked how Jock was.

"Jock Ewan's nae warth askin' aboot," was Mary's answer.

"I hae made up my mind to gie him up althegither," said Jane; "but what's he been doin' noo?"

Mary burst forth with her budget of news on the instant, and the indignant woman—Cameron was a woman now—took the place of the penitent.

Jock Ewan had been "carrying on" again; he had been very unlucky, and the police had been hard upon him and worrying him. He had given up the place in the Old Wynd, and gone to live with the Frazer girls, and the Frazer boys who were in the Wynd also, it may be premised. Then he and Annie Frazer had taken to keeping "house" together, or rather, had gone partners in a house with another vicious couple setting up in busi-

ness—and Jennie Cameron might consider herself thrown overboard from that time forth.

"I alwa' told ye to hae naethin' to do wi' the loon!" Mary Loggie cried.

Jane Cameron gave vent to an indignant outburst at this news. If she had resolved to decline Johnnie Ewan's acquaintanceship from that date, still it was hard to be forestalled before she had apprised him of her intention. In her indignation she forgot all the resolutions she had formed, tore up the address of the matron at the reformatory, or whatever it was, for Jane had no recollection at the time of her relation of the story; she had been ill-treated, and now she would "pay Ewan out" for it.

Both these girls went into a whiskey-shop in the Bridge-gate, and had a glass each on the strength of their reunion. Jane had imbibed her mother's taste for whiskey, and in excited moments it was necessary to seek the consolation which that drink afforded.

They were drinking thus when old Loggie sauntered in with another man, to whom he had cogent reasons for standing treat, and the

greeting with Jane, and the congratulations at seeing her face again, turned Jane's head, and made her cry once more. Then came more whiskey, and then Jane, crying afresh—more from drink than contrition now—told them all how she was going to amend, and how the parson had been talking to her—at which there was plenty of laughing, and Jane laughed too after a time, and said, "it was only a spurt!"

Loggie, who was in good spirits, invited Jane home to the old place in the Close; and here more whiskey was produced from the stone jug she had been so well acquainted with; and then away went the last glimmer of reason, and it was the old story—the same melancholy *dénouement* as had characterized her first return from Glasgow Gaol.

Jane took up her residence with the Loggies—she did not intend to stop with them any longer than she could turn herself round, she said—and she commenced again that cent.-per-cent. credit system by which it was supposed Loggie, senior, was fast accumulating a fine fortune to himself.

Loggie senior's turn was coming to get into trouble, however—there is a rule that knavery shall

not flourish uninterruptedly, no matter how careful its votaries may be; and three months from that period the little family in Close No. 700 was broken up and scattered. Both Loggie and his wife "came to grief," as the phrase runs; the detectives were too keen for them in this instance, and they were carried away to gaol; and for good—for good in all senses of the word—one infamous den was broken up.

Jane Cameron had been three months with them then—had taken to theft again—had, with a cunning matured by experience, watched opportunities and escaped through the network of danger in all instances. She was particularly careful in thus stealing for a living; she dreaded more than ever going back to prison, not for the sake of its punishment, but for the horror of its isolation. She preferred to starve rather than to steal boldly—her caution now would have greatly irritated Jock Ewan.

By this time she had returned to the New Vennel—the birthplace where her mother had ill-treated her in the far-off days. She, Mary Loggie, and another girl of the name of Clarkson,

took a "house" to themselves—i. e. a room of narrow dimensions, as the reader understands by this time—and tried every evil means of living that suggested themselves. They were the decoy members of an infamous gang in the same lodging-house, and here the old life—worse than the old life—went on.

Jane Cameron heard of Jock Ewan very often—met him frequently in the streets, but maintained a rigid silence towards him. She was nursing her hate, and it preyed upon her. She saw the father of her unborn child, but he had treated her ill; he flaunted before her his "new girl," and *she* sneered at Jane and her "airs," and wondered what else she could expect. All Jane Cameron's love for him vanished utterly away, but her jealousy remained.

She had not been a month in the New Vennel before Ewan—ever shifting his lodging on the principle he had invariably adopted—also came to the New Vennel with this woman, who was three years Jane's senior, and one year the senior of Ewan. This brought them all more frequently into contact, led to quarrelling on

the stairs, and threats of a variety of kinds to "do" for each other when a chance should fall in the way. The chance fell in Jane Cameron's way, and she availed herself of it in this wise.

There had been a robbery in the Vennel—a robbery that had not been treated lightly by the victim, who had resisted, and who, escaping from the den, had laid his report before the police, and been so explicit with his details that Jock Ewan became subject to suspicion. Ewan disappeared before he could be called upon for an explanation, and inquiries for him became more urgent in consequence.

Ann Frazer, Jane's rival, was not concerned in this crime, was not identified by the prosecutor, she being absent from the Vennel at the time of the commission of the robbery. To detract suspicion from Ewan's hiding-place, she remained at her house in the Vennel, and was deaf to all persuasions of the police—feigned, when questioned on the subject, the most perfect ignorance of Ewan's whereabouts.

Jane and she met very frequently on the common stair of the Crescent, and Ewan's ab-

sence from home rendered them no better friends. Disputes will arise between women who have an antipathy to each other, and have the misfortune to live in the same house, and Ann Frazer and Cameron formed no exception to the rule.

After Ewan's absence, a fresh taunt very naturally suggested itself to Jane.

"Ye'll nae see Johnnie Ewan again—he'll thraw ye aside as he did me, Ann."

"Not he—he's too fond o' me."

"He'll be aff oot o' Glasgie on the first chance, and then whistle him bock, if ye can."

"I wudna whistle for any mon," was the quick answer.

"P'raps ye ken where he be noo?"

"Gin I did, I would not tell Jennie Cameron."

"Hoot awa wi' ye!—Johnnie Ewan was always too cannie to trust a woman wi' his secret."

"He'll trust me."

Ann Frazer's confident manner enraged Jane still more, and led to fresh taunts, innuendoes, and invectives, summarily cut short by Ann Frazer slamming the door in Cameron's face.

Affairs continued thus for three or four days, till the Saturday night, when these two young women met again in the Salt-market. Saturday night is a rare drinking-night in Glasgow yet, and was infinitely worse in the time of which I treat. Everyone with a taste for drink—every poor person to whom drink is an attraction, perhaps a disease—treats himself or herself to a "wee drap" of whiskey on that night in particular. Jane would rather have gone without her supper than this "wee drap" now—it was a stimulant, and kept her spirits from wholly vanishing away. Ann Frazer did not object to whiskey at any time, and at that period was suspiciously wasteful of her money.

They met at the bar of a drinking-house, and Mary Loggie made a futile attempt to render these women friends—an attempt which might have succeeded, had not Ann been more than usually boastful.

She was in luck's way—the old story about "luck," which stands for successful crime—she did not want to earn her own living, she had a friend who would always earn *that*

for her; he was clever enough to see his way and blindfold other people. She could afford to stand glasses round to drink that friend's health, if Jane Cameron dared to drink it.

Glasses were ordered round, as Jane was willing to dare anything, and 'Cannie Jock's' health was drunk in neat whiskey. After that, the subject of Master Ewan brought round the old grievance, and the women were at high words again, much to the annoyance of the landlord, who had been threatened with proceedings for harbouring disorderly characters. Jane taunted Ann Frazer with her superior knowledge—asserted that she knew nothing of Ewan, and that he was too cannie to trust his secret to any woman upon earth, and Ann Frazer in a fit of ungovernable fury disclosed the hiding-place of "her man," and told her to go and look at him for herself—she'd let her know that she was to be trusted with a secret.

The quarrel was finished out in the Salt-market, and the disputants would have concluded the evening in the station-house had not friends

of both crowded round them and taken them different ways.

Jane Cameron found her way to the New Vennel—dizzy with drink, she groped her way to the top-room, and sat down on the big stone which served for a footstool there. Mary Loggie had not returned with her, and she was left to brood over the new quarrel on the old subject. Her wrongs, she assured the narrator afterwards, in her own plain way, assumed a gigantic appearance that night—kept her mind distracted and her heart beating rapidly. All John Ewan's treachery revived her wish for vengeance—his preference for Ann Frazer—a woman she hated—exasperated her beyond endurance. She had not drunk so deeply as Ann Frazer that night, and her memory was tenacious. She remembered the address of Johnnie Ewan, and how it lay in her power to serve him out for the shabby trick that he had once played her. She had always sworn to pay him out when the chance presented itself, and there might never occur again the opportunity to wreak her woman's vengeance. Down the dark stairs into the crowded High Street she went

again, irresolved what to do, whether to give him up or not. She would walk about the streets and think of it, and whilst thinking of it, and sobering herself in the night-air, a detective officer well known to her, stopped to exchange a few words.

The detectives invariably assume a friendly air with the street wanderers—much information is gained thereby, and nothing is lost by being civil. They have their rough jokes for the men, their compliments for the women, and their ears always open to the chance remarks of both of them.

"Well, Jennie!"

"Well, Robert!"

"How are you to-night?"

"Pretty well."

"Where's Cannie Jock? What have you done with him?" was the next question, asked as a joke this time, the detective being pretty certain that Jane Cameron was not in the secret.

Jane resented his remark.

"Ye dinna think I can tell you?"

"To be sure not."

The detective officer remarked something

strange in Jane's demeanour, and did his best to elicit the truth. Had she drunk no whiskey he would not have succeeded, for she would have been disposed to hold back the secret acquired from her drunken rival; but the whiskey fed the revengeful feelings that were in her, and the detective knew what strings to play on, and played his best. "Dinna bring my name in question—find it a 'oot by your ain sel, mon."

He assented to this, and still Jane hesitated, till he told her of how Johnnie Ewan had been "making fun" of her all the time she was in prison, even before she went to prison, when he used to meet Ann Frazer on the sly.

Jane burst forth with the revelation which Ann Frazer had made to her, in her angry desire to prove how far she could be trusted—Ewan was hiding in one of the closes in High Street: she particularized which close—and the bloodhound of the law started off on the track at once.

"When I had told him I leaned against the street corner and cried," confessed Jane Cameron. She ran down the street after him, to ask him not to go in search of Johnnie. She

went on to the close and hid about, in all the open doorways, listening.

She thought of stealing up-stairs and warning Johnnie Ewan of the police; but she felt that the police were already there, and it was out of her power now. She waited in the close for the result; presently she heard footsteps coming down the common stair, and then the detective, a constable, and Ewan emerged from the dark cavity, and went slowly up the narrow passage into the High Street—from High Street, to Nelson Street, and the police station. Not finding courage to proceed farther, Cameron went back to the New Vennel to cry over what she had done.

She felt that she did not hate John Ewan any longer—that she would have died to set him free again.

"Not that I luved him any mair, but that it was so wicked a thing for me to do."

This was Cameron's idea of what was wicked.

When Mary Loggie came home, a little while before Clarkson, she found Jane still grieving over a something which she would not confess,

but which she found out in due course, and then asserted that it served Ewan right.

"But I ne'er thocht sae," remarked Jane, "for I was ne'er lucky again; everythin went clean agin me after that—trooble upon trooble, as I might hae expected."

Jane Cameron was superstitious—like most ignorant people—and set down the misfortunes which followed her, and for which she had but herself to thank, to her meanness in disclosing the secret of Jock Ewan's hiding-place.

And Jock Ewan, who departs from this history of a fallen woman, in whom so little good is yet apparent? It is satisfactory, on the part of the writer, to let him pass from these pages: I do not think the reader will object to his retirement.

Jane Cameron saw him at his trial, I believe; and then he vanished away, as thieves do vanish at uncertain intervals: their lives being doomed to sudden changes. And whether he returned to Glasgow or not, after a sentence of seven years' transportation, I have no means of informing those readers who may be curious on the subject.

CHAPTER XV.

HELPING HANDS.

JANE CAMERON never forgave herself that one bit of treachery. Jealousy and drink brought it about, and led her to betray Ewan; but she never reckoned upon those diseases as extenuating circumstances. Cameron was an exception to the rules of her order—for thieves seldom betray each other—have, in their odd-fashioned ideas of what is right, a horror of one bad character betraying another to justice. There is such a rule as "honour among thieves," and the man or woman who breaks it is likely to regret the act of betrayal.

Jane Cameron's secret was known to Mary Loggie, and she kept it even from her fellow-

lodger, Clarkson. Ann Frazer did not guess at the means by which Ewan had been apprehended: she had continued her drinking-bout that night until the police had taken her to the station-house, and in her sober moments, when she was turned out of the police-cell, she heard the news of Ewan's arrest with no consciousness of having helped so materially to that unlooked-for result.

She was a girl who did not grieve, however, and took the ills that flesh is heir to with wonderful composure; she left the Vennel for a new home, and Jane saw her, a few nights after Ewan's sentence, in company with a friend of Ewan's, who had offered her consolation for her morganatic widowhood.

Jane was now fast approaching her confinement, and the "luck" was still against her—went against her secretly and decisively, and exposed her to trials such as, before or since, she had never experienced. During the last month she was almost too weak to get about the streets, and in the streets was existence, but at home only starvation. Clarkson left them to lodge

with a "pal," who had just served her time at Glasgow Prison, and thus there was the rent to be made up by the two in lieu of three—sevenpence-halfpenny each instead of five-pence—a serious consideration when victims are scarce and pockets are impenetrable, or people walk suspiciously about with their hands in them. Jane began again to be afraid of dying, and thought once or twice of the chaplain's warning, till thinking, in that home with those companions around her, was too horrible; and she fancied that it would be better to die suddenly, without thinking of it at all, than face the awful truth and feel powerless to save herself.

"No good could come to her in the Vennel—Mary Loggie would ha' laughed hersel to death, if she had talked aboot her sins, and dying in them. It was too late."

Not fifteen years of age, and she thought that it was too late for repentance!

It must be put to the credit account of Mary Loggie, that she remained by Jane's side in this tribulation—that she might have bettered herself by joining her sisters, who had been *fortunate*

lately—and that she preferred to keep with Cameron. She begged, borrowed, and stole for their mutual support, when Jane was too ill to leave the Vennel: she cooked, did the washing, went on errands, found out an old woman who was great in midwifery, and who undertook to see Jane safely through her trouble.

But, before the trouble came, the rent-man refused to let them remain any longer in the Crescent, and these two girls took their departure, and found refuge for a term, and at a price that was agreed upon to be paid when funds were at command, in the room of an Irish beggar-woman, who had been fortunate enough to secure a room in a "free close," that had been deserted by its landlord to evade an action for repairs.

Closes of this kind were more common ten or fifteen years ago in Glasgow than they are at the present time. A house would become so fearfully dilapidated, and threaten so speedy a fall into the narrow court, that it would be pronounced dangerous by the Procurator Fiscal, and its proprietor would in many cases prefer resigning the property to the expense of rendering it habitable.

A place thus deserted would be eagerly seized upon by the poorer classes, ever on the look-out for a cheap home, and free quarters would be retained until the house was condemned and pulled down, or death took away the tenants who had been fortunate enough to secure a domicile there. In the latter case, the news spread through the closes adjacent that some one holding a free "house" in a certain close or wynd was not expected to live, and quickly a crowd of expectants hung about the court and on the common stair, waiting for the breath to pass from the body of the occupant, in order to make a rush for admittance, or endeavouring *to bribe* the dying man or woman into giving possession just a little while before! The first comer's rights were respected by the less fortunate, who made their way down stairs, trusting for better luck next time it pleased Providence to take one of these proprietors out of the way. In this close, with a beggar-woman for landlady, and surrounded by Irish, who were generally the most apt at securing these little freeholds, the unhappy girl waited her time to give birth to her child. She gave no thought as to the baby at that period;

she was sorely afraid of the result for herself; clinging to life—that life of misery, shame and guilt—with a tenacity natural enough in one so young.

The beggar-woman was a comfort to her at this period; kept up her spirits by treating lightly the matter altogether; was very kind to her also, as the Irish always are, no matter of what class, or however low may be their own estate. And Mary Loggie, in the midst of all this, went in search of food and money; returning sometimes with both, very often with neither.

"What's to become o' us?" whispered Jane one night; "I had better hae gan to the workus."

"Oh! the workus!—that's awfu'!" answered Mary, with a thief's horror of that institution, "better anythin than that."

The beggar-woman thought that stealing something and getting into prison at once would have been the best plan for Jane. Mary had thought so, and hinted so before this; but with all its comforts for the poor and houseless, all its temptations—even in a Scotch prison, where the food is less than in the English—Jane shrank still

from prison life, and would have preferred starving to coolly committing a crime for the purpose of detection and incarceration. She struggled on till her time came, and a child, in the midst of much desolation and penury, was born. She thought that she was going to die, and gave one wail over the past crimes. "Oh! I wish I had na been sae wicked a' my life!" But the midwife and the old beggar-woman assured her that she was getting on famously; that in less than a fortnight she would be about again. "I didna think muckle o' the wee bairn the first nicht," she said, "but on the second day I luved it awfully!"

The mother's instinct gave birth to a love for the child born under adverse circumstances, and she clung to it in her weakness and trouble as to the one hope that brightened her life.

It was a terrible effort to live in that free close; it was a poverty that even alarmed her who had passed through several degrees of penury in her day. Once she was without food for twenty-four hours, and she began to fear that she and her baby must die of starvation in that great and wealthy city.

But the Irish who thronged that unhealthy dwelling-place knew her condition, and did their best for her. They were principally beggars, with a sparse sprinkling of thieves, who preferred living at as cheap a rate as possible; and the feminine portion, callous as they naturally were, felt their womanly sympathies aroused by the young girl's miserable position.

They came up to her room, where she lay on the shavings in a corner with her baby, and talked to her, and bade her be cheerful, for she'd get strong enough presently. They pitied her position, and ignored the shame of it, and did their best to support her by their humble contributions. One woman would bring a bit of fish from her own hardly-earned dinner; another had a little milk to offer her in a tea-cup; and the old beggar-woman was prolific with dry crusts, which she had accumulated in a long day's round. Still Jane did not get strong very rapidly; at the end of a fortnight she felt still miserably weak, although she made an effort to sit up in her corner for a few hours a day. The Irish denizens could not understand her "playing the lady" so long;

a fortnight with them was a return to the old strength and the old work, and they were disappointed in the little progress manifested by the young mother. The child itself was very weak, sickly, and querulous: it was fighting hard for the life which had been given it, but it was an uphill journey, and the child's breath was scant.

Jane had learnt to love it now very passionately: it was the first thing which she had had to love—the vagabond Ewan excepted—and her fears that she should lose it made her fret.

Mary Loggie, who sat by her, who was her nurse, and who relieved guard by nursing Jane's little boy, gave her much attention, but very little sympathy. She was a woman of the world, who could not understand for what reason Jane wanted the child to live.

"I'm thinkin' ye'll find it an awfu' trooble," she would say, "a pull upon ye, that'll be vera hard to manage. What'll ye do wi' the bairn when ye get strang?"

"What do ither folk do?" inquired Jane.

"They're na like ye; not so young, not sae puir, not sae lanelie, Jennie."

"That's true."

"And I'm thinkin' that it would na be *sae* terrible if it deed, but just the vera best thing that could happen to it."

"Oh! dinna gae an like that, Mary."

Mary might have been right, for what was to become of this child, save to be ranked as one more in a sinful crowd? but it was a stern philosophy which chilled Jane Cameron, and to which she would not listen. Jane would not consider the future—what was to become of the child, or how was she to support it? She considered nothing but her love for it, and the comfort that it was to her, nestling to her side, and making her feel not entirely alone in the world.

What Mary Loggie said chilled her blood, but made her love the child the more; and when the beggar-woman followed Mary's example, and was of the same opinion as Mary, Jane cried, because they were all against her, and had "ne'er had a gude word for the wee thing."

Jane was not well in three weeks; at the end of a month, she could only walk feebly up and down the room. She descended once with her baby in

her arms into the narrow court or close for "a breath of air"—such air as might be obtained in that place, where the houses were three feet apart and five stories high—and it seemed almost death to her to climb all the stairs back again to her lair.

Still she must get on now—she was deeply in debt, and tiring out the patience of those who had been kind to her—and she made an effort every day, and would *not* give way again! She was beginning to consider herself strong, when Mary Loggie, who had been absent all day, entered not an appearance in the evening. Mary Loggie kept very fair hours—could not do without her "bit of sleep," she had always said; and when it came to three and four in the morning, her absence alarmed Jane, who had grown very thoughtful and nervous lately.

"I'll gae down to the police office," Jane said at last.

The old woman huddled up in the corner bade her be still for a witless fool, and went to sleep again, muttering that Mary Loggie was all right; but Jane was of a restless disposition, and

more than commonly anxious that night about her "pal," who had been faithful to her throughout her illness. She felt sure that Mary had fallen into trouble again—there were a hundred reasons for her absence; but in her nervousness, she fixed upon that one which would affect her most of all at that time.

Too restless and excited to sleep, she rose, caught her baby to her breast, covered it with the shawl, and then went out barefooted and scantily clad into the High Street, and across the High Street to the police-station that she knew so well.

"I kenned what had happened before I put a question to 'em," she said; "some ane must hae told me in my dreams aboot her."

Into the lighted office, and looking across the counter at the clerks who were always at work there—at all hours of the day and night, booking charges, registering articles found in the possession of the arrested one, entering in their unwieldy books reports of new cases brought in by the night detectives, who had been scouring the streets in search of information. The clock

ticked noisily, the pens were travelling rapidly over the paper, a reporter of one of the Glasgow journals was waiting for the latest news before "going to press," and sleeping soundly during the interim.

"If you please, sir, is Mary Loggie here?"

"What name?"

"Mary Loggie."

The clerk on duty there to reply to questions of this character, turned slowly over a leaf of his book.

"Yes."

"What's the charge, sir?"

"Pocket-picking."

Jane Cameron went slowly out of the station-house, holding her baby tightly to her breast. She was now friendless in the world, and the law would be hard upon Mary Loggie this time.

What was to become of her now?

CHAPTER XVI.

"THE BEGGING LAY."

MARY LOGGIE was tried at a higher court for her new offence, which, aggravated by previous convictions, was not leniently dealt with. Here had been a bold attempt at robbery, and it merited a punishment of a severe character. Mary Loggie was sentenced by the sheriffs to twelve months' imprisonment.

Deprived of the assistance of Mary, gathering strength but slowly, and too weak yet awhile to be ever on the watch for likely subjects to steal from—she intended to steal again when she was better off—still it was necessary to live.

She even began to think with less horror of the workhouse, when the beggar-woman suggested

her own calling, as one that, at certain times of the year, was sure to pay.

"You and your sick babby might turn in a power of pence," she said; "I should try it. Make yourself look as miserable as you can, and go in the crowded parts of Glasgie. That babby's worth a crown a week to one who knows how to manage well."

Jane set forth on this errand, a deplorable picture enough, and wandered as far as her strength would permit. She was very weak still, and could not follow up those who, tired by her persistence, might relent, and give her money to be quit of her; but her appearance was vastly in her favour, and many were touched by her destitute aspect.

"What a young mither!" was the general comment—"poor creature!" was often added by those whose hearts were moved at her condition. Jane returned home to the close with one shilling and sixpence in her pocket, together with a pair of shoes, which had been given her by a charitable old lady in Frederick Street.

The address of the lady was learned by the old

Irishwoman,—the addresses of all who bestow eleemosynary gifts on stragglers are circulated amongst the numbers who make begging a well-studied business—and the shoes, which, although not new, were in good condition, were taken to a wee pawnshop and disposed of for sixpence.

"What! on the begging lay, Jennie?" was the comment of the first policeman who recognized her in the streets.

"Is na beggin' better than stealin'?"

"We dinna allow begging," answered the officer; but he was not hard with her, and affected not to notice her avocation. He considered it doubtless an improvement on her past career, and so gave her a chance of succeeding in it, to the best of her ability.

Jane was three weeks a beggar in the Glasgow streets, and then the monotony of the occupation wearied her, and the harsh rebuffs she experienced tried her temper as her strength came round. Besides, being out in all weathers gave her baby a cough, and begging, after all, was arduous work, and to a thief given to snatch at large sums of money, particularly wearisome.

It suited the Irish—it suited those who were clever at imposture, which she was not; it suited people who had been brought up to it, and clung to it as to a profession which they loved.

A few of the beggars were thieves when an opportunity presented itself; but they were very careful, and would not risk a long sentence in prison, for that ruined their trade and cut up their "connection." The beggars of Glasgow were a saving class: one man, by feigning to be imbecile, accumulated as much as 700*l.* before he died on a bare floor, with his son in ignorance of his father being worth a penny!

In Jane Cameron's time, the beggars were accustomed to meet together in a house in Wallace Court, Glasgow. The place was called "The Beggars' Haunt," and was a frightful den to visit in those days. Here, the work being over, the beggar men and women would congregate, compare notes, ask and give advice on various matters, and wind up the evening by card-playing, dice-throwing, and whiskey-drinking, accompanying all three by an obscenity and blasphemy which would have put thieves to the blush.

It is strange to assert here that Jane Cameron grew *ashamed* of this life and these people. Their manners horrified her; their skill in imposture, and their revolting methods of maiming and disfiguring themselves, were things to which she never became accustomed; the taunts of her old companions weaned her gradually from this new pursuit.

There was nothing bold or daring in the life; and in a thief's life the false excitement has a certain amount of attraction. In this beggars' haunt there was nothing but hypocrisy—hypocrisy of so rank a character, so sedulously followed up, that there was no wholly shaking it off, even in their orgies. One man, who was accustomed to feign idiocy of a horrible description, became three-fourths of an idiot at last, imposture being a decadent, and preying on the minds of all who practise it.

Jane went to the beggars' haunt once or twice, but the feasting and revelry there were not to her taste; and when they wanted *to buy* her baby of her, she gave them up for good. That was the last feather on the camel's back, and disgusted her

with the fraternity. *The whole thing was too low for her, and she had lost caste by mixing with these miserable wretches.*

She gave them up, left the close and the Irish beggar-woman who had been kind to her. She was stronger now, and a chance presented itself of sharing a home in a close with some new "pals" —setting up in business on an original principle, which was to elude the clutch of the law for ever afterwards.

CHAPTER XVII.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

JANE CAMERON plunged headlong into the old life: she was strong enough to steal again, when the baby would allow her—that is, when it would suffer itself to be rocked to sleep and laid in a corner of the room until her return.

This baby was a strange hinderance to her guilty life—it was always in her way, but she loved it the more for that reason. When it was ill—and it was never well—it kept her within doors, "minding house" for her pals' return, soothing, hushing, and singing to it as young mothers who have lived virtuously all their lives soothe, hush, and sing to the children whom they idolize.

There was "rare fun" made, at times, about Cameron's brat; her new companions objected to

children of all descriptions, and cursed the child at night, when it woke up and refused to be pacified. They were always persuading Jane to leave it at home and come into the streets in search of their prey without it; and Jane, a girl easily persuaded, would occasionally leave it in a corner on its bed of rags, shavings, or straw, as the case might be, and depart, returning home at a late hour to find the close ringing with the child's cries. Once upon her return, the child, to her horror, was missing, and she dashed to the next "den" to make inquiries, and found the woman—as vile a character as any in Glasgow—rocking the child to sleep in her arms.

"What are ye doin' wi' my bairn?" shrieked Jane, tearing it from the arms of its new nurse.

"It was dinging doun the hoose with its skreeks," replied her neighbour, "and the man doun stairs swore he'd come up an' cut its throat, if it kept on sic a noise. And I could na bear the wee thing's bleating mysel'."

"Ye're na richt to touch my bairn!"

And this was Jane Cameron's return for a neighbour's kindness! She was jealous of her child

falling in love with a strange face, and preferring the stranger to herself; the kindness of comforting the little one in its fear, and for its mother's loss, was thus rewarded by the mother's ingratitude.

There was an interchange of personalities on the staircase, and then the door of each cell—for these rooms in the close are nothing more or better than ill-ventilated and ill-smelling cells — was slammed, and Jane sat down to comfort her bairn.

She took the "bairn" out with her for several nights in succession after that. She feared the woman in the next "house" weaning the infant's love away—she was not going to nurse *her* child whilst her back was turned! Jane's companions objected to Jane's company when the child was brought into the streets; its voice spoiled business by attracting too much attention, and they heartily wished that it would die, and so an end to it, and the maundering of a girl who might have been useful to them, and who had been always clever at picking pockets.

In all weathers, then, for the next week or two, Jane wandered about the streets with the child

under her shawl—she begged with it, stole with it, went reeling home in a state of intoxication with it, the mother's instinct holding it to her breast, and saving it from slipping from her arms.

She and her companions quarrelled constantly about the child; one heartless wretch even suggested the desertion of it, and one—half in jest, half in earnest—thought that it might be easily dropped into the Clyde from the Broomielaw, and never a soul the wiser!

"Poor people can't afford to keep children, and be bothered with 'em—children weren't meant for the like o' us."

In the Salt-market, one Saturday night, a figure from the past took her by the arm, and stared eagerly into her face.

"Jennie!"

"Mither!"

The woman who had deserted the child shook her by the hand, and expressed her satisfaction at seeing her. Jane, who had been alone in the world so long, was as glad to see her mother, also, as though their parting had been the most affectionate and heartrending.

Without a friend she cared about then—Ewan a traitor and in prison, Mary Loggie in prison too—associating with a "new lot" with whom she did not agree, she was glad to alight upon her mother in the bustle and turmoil of that ever-busy street.

"So ye're bock agin?"

"Ay, and I've been lookin' for ye a' the nicht."

"Let us come and talk it over—where are ye lodgin'?"

Jane informed her.

"I dinna want a lot o' girls round me," said her mother, who was particular about her company; "we'll lodge in anither close to-nicht. What's that bundle?"

"My bairn!"

"Ech—so ye're come to that already! I thocht ye'd gae wrang—what a trouble it maun be to ye!"

"Not a bit."

"Where's the father o' it?"

"In prison for seven years."

"Gude Lord! ye hae made a mess o' it, Jennie," said the mother; "puir lassie, it's hard. Come and hae some whiskey before we gae any farther."

Into a whiskey-shop went mother and daughter—

struggled their way to the bar, whereat they stood drinking, talking, and exchanging notes. "The mither was different," commented Jane, at this episode; "she talked to me like a woman, and after a' I liked her a little. I was vera glad to set een on her, though she had ne'er said a gude word to me afore this time."

The mother had not been treated well by the [illegible]ince her sudden departure from the New [illegible] The man who had accompanied her, and [illegible]om she had passed "off and on" so years of her life, had deserted her at last—[illegible]ped to America with a girl young enough to [illegible] his daughter, and without saying so much as good-bye to her. She stood at the bar of the whiskey-shop, and cursed the man who had deceived her, till her energetic gestures made the drinkers laugh who were near her. She had been living in Perth, then in Aberdeen, since the time when she might have got into trouble by staying at Glasgow; but the affair having blown over, and the case not being likely to be raked up again, she had chanced coming back to the old spot, where she had always been able to get a living.

That is a singular fascination which brings the criminal back to the old haunts: it is like a man's love for his country, or his birthplace, and Scotch women are particularly prone to the attraction—in the prison, their hearts yearn for the towns or cities where the crime was committed that brought them to punishment—their reminiscences are of those crowded spots; all their many sorrows, their trials, temptations and tribulations are thought of as other people think of their pleasures and joys, and when they are free again, they drift back to the old haunts, at any expense, at any risk—back once more to the vortex wherein every womanly trait was whirled away years ago. Years of captivity do not wean the prisoner from her love of the old "Guilt-Garden;" she is fond of talking of it to the woman put in association with her, and to dream of being free in the vennels, wynds, and closes of "auld Glasgie" or Edinbro' is a happy dream, from which she curses the "quarter to six bell" for arousing her.

Though, with her usual good fortune, she had escaped captivity, Mrs. Cameron could not resist returning to Glasgow. She knew every turning

of the old place, the name of every close, and the place was home to her. Deserted by the man with whom she had cohabited, she had wandered about in a restless fashion, which impelled her as it were to the city again; she had even a wish to meet this daughter of hers—she would be old enough to be her companion now, and together, perhaps, they might manage to work. She told Jane this had been her thought, at least, and Jane believed her, and took to her mother after her usual impulsive manner.

The matter of the desertion was an old story, and she did not dilate upon it, although everybody had said, at the time, what a shame it was. The man would not allow Jane to accompany them—"he ne'er liked ye, Jennie, ye ken," and Cameron, satisfied with the explanation, allowed the subject to be dismissed.

There is a place called the Old Vennel, as well as the New Vennel, in Glasgow. They lie parallel to each other, separated by Glasgow College and Blackfriars Street. In the Old Vennel, by way of a change, Mrs. Cameron and her daughter took lodgings together; were joined by one or

two members of that innumerable gang of disreputables infesting the low quarters of all towns.

The detectives, visiting all questionable localities, soon found Jane Cameron located with her mother in the Old Vennel. The mother was recognized by the police, but, as she had prejudged, the affair had blown over, and that which would have been very difficult to prove at the time was not likely to be rendered any clearer by the lapse of years and absence of witnesses. The case was alluded to, and Mrs. Cameron feigned entire ignorance of it in the most natural manner, which might have deceived the police or not, according to fancy. Mrs. Cameron, who was a conceited woman, considered that she had "done them" very nicely, but her daughter had her own opinion on that matter. She had had great experience of the detectives, and knew that they were not likely to be easily deceived. In the sharp eyes of those gentlemen she could read that their new "house" was already marked, and that calls were likely to be frequent there.

They began business carefully—mother, and daughter, and friends—the old cruel business of

preying upon honest folk, robbing and maltreating them. Jane could leave her baby at home for her mother to mind, and be free to flaunt the streets now, watchful of the folly which might be misled and tempted away.

"It's the safest plan—much safer than pocket-pickin'," remarked Mrs. Cameron. "If ye had alwa followed it, ye would na hae been to prison twice, I reckon."

We need not dwell on the details of this fresh lease of crime. The reader can easily imagine what this life was—how much deeper it submerged Jane Cameron.

I dwell upon this phase of her existence in order to call attention to a fact confessed by Cameron, and which, for all I know to the contrary, may exist still, and might, by a little care, be remedied.

At the back of the Old Vennel runs a street called Hunter Street, in which is the barrack-wall dividing the barracks and grounds from the main thoroughfare. When Jane Cameron lived in the Old Vennel, it was not an unusual custom for some of the soldiers — the black

sheep of the regiment, in most cases—to leave their sleeping quarters, scale the walls, and make for the low lodging-houses in the Vennels adjacent.

One or two were accomplices of the women infesting these quarters, and were in the habit of inducing their companions—especially companions who had lately seen their relations, and had money to spend—to scale the walls with them, and have a "night's spree" in the dens adjacent to the place. These foolish soldiers were encouraged by Mrs. Cameron; they were the best of customers, and, although much money might never be reckoned upon, yet they were men who could never complain or confess to so gross a breach of military discipline as escaping from the barracks in the dead of the night to the Vennels.

Whether this continues, is a matter I leave to the consideration of the powers that be. The Vennels are there still—swarming still with the dregs of Glasgow life; the barracks are there still, and human nature has not undergone very startling changes since the time I dwell upon in this narrative.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JANE CAMERON'S LOSS.

SINKING farther and farther away from hope, bearing the unenviable reputation of being one of the worst girls in Glasgow, Jane Cameron's devotion to her child did not undergo any diminution.

In the midst of her worst acts she remembered it; sober or intoxicated, she was always anxious to weary her companions about it, and to ask those who had been mothers themselves why it always looked so ill, and got no stronger.

One evening, returning somewhat suddenly to the Vennel, she discovered Mrs. Cameron in the act of drugging the child to sleep, and she knocked the spoon from her hand, with a frightful imprecation on the mother.

"That's why my bairn dinna get strang—ye're pisoning him!"

"I'm sendin' him aff to sleep; it's the best thing for him," growled the mother.

"Ye'll na send him aff to sleep wi' those things!" said Jane, and she took the babe from her mother's arms, sat down by the fire, and refused to stir again for the rest of the night. Then began the first quarrel between mother and daughter. Staying at home was losing a chance, and Mrs. Cameron was a covetous woman, who never liked a chance to slip. That very evening a man half drunk, and with plenty of money in his pocket, might be strolling up High Street, anxious for any distraction—who knows? Jane refused to go out, or to trust the baby with her mother again. She was of an obstinate nature in her way, and when resolved upon a plan of action it was difficult to turn her.

She remained at home that day because her spirit had been aroused; on the second day, because her baby became very ill indeed. It was not the cough, to which Jane was accustomed; it was not the old weakness which had seized the child—it

was something new, which utterly prostrated it. She wished to send her mother for the doctor—a suggestion which horrified Mrs. Cameron, who had no faith in doctors, and no desire to pay money to them; and when the mother refused to go, Jane caught the baby up in her arms, and covering it with her shawl, hurried away in search of assistance.

The first doctor was out, and she went on to the second, who looked at the child, and then told Jane to take it home at once—it ought not to have been brought out in the night air.

"What's the matter with the boy?"

"Fever."

"What fever?"

"Scarlet fever."

"Oh! good God, sir, say it winna kill him!"

"The child's in a bad state—where do you live?"

"In the Old Vennel."

"Oh, indeed!" was the dry response.

"Ye'll come and see him?"

"Well—yes, I'll come and see him."

He ascertained the address from Jane, and the next day came to see the child. Jane had taken a fancy to this doctor, and would have no other —seek no dispensary or hospital. He understood the child's complaint, and she had the idea that a doctor who was *paid* for his attendance, must know more than one who would come for nothing.

The mother quarrelled with her upon this point also, and fresh words ensued, and threats of separation were made on both sides.

"I wish I'd ne'er come back to ye," said the mother.

"I wish ye had na," was the response.

Meanwhile, the baby grew worse, and the doctor gave no hope of its amendment. The fever was likely to spread also; one of the lodgers caught it of the child, and had to lie down on the shavings, and rave at Jane and the baby for bringing her into that trouble.

Jane nursed and cried over her child, taking no heed of this vituperation; if she could have remembered the Lord's Prayer, which the Scrip-

ture-reader had taught her in Glasgow Gaol, she would have attempted it—tried it, like a charm which might have been lucky to her!

"I thocht o' Jock Ewan again—and kenned all at once that it was to serve me out for that," said the superstitious woman; "I gave up then, and was sure that the child would die."

She told her mother so, and was comforted with the following remark:—

"Sae muckle the better!"

"I think I hated the mither after that—I ken that I had nae vera great luve for her afore."

When the doctor finally gave the child up, Jane went in search of another medical man, who might give her more hope, and when the same verdict was delivered, she returned to the Old Vennel, and sat down to see the last of it.

The last of it came the next night—late the next night, which was a Sunday, when there was more noise than usual in the flat, the denizens having laid in whiskey for the day, and been employed all day in drinking it. They were singing

ribald songs, quarrelling and fighting undernea her, and on all sides of her, when this child of outcast mother drifted to heaven before it kn aught of the temptations of earth.

"It was like the deevil in the hoose th nicht—I shall ne'er forget it," said Jane.

When the child was dead, Jane laid it o with her own hands, and then took comfort the whiskey which her mother proffered her way of solace.

"In trouble, there's nothing like whiskey!" the motto of the Glasgow unfortunates.

CHAPTER XIX.

UNSETTLED.

The little spark of a better nature visible in this woman, died out with the child she had loved. After that time, wholly bad—wholly wretched and depraved.

Her sorrow at the child's loss was great—was even visible after the drink which she sought by way of solace, and which rendered her grief more extravagant. This demonstrative sorrow puzzled and annoyed her contemporaries; they could not understand the principle on which she fretted, and endeavoured for a while to reason her out of it. Many of them had had children themselves, and lost them; had been glad to lose them, and feel an incumbrance, expense, trouble, shaken

off their shoulders—others had even tired of them so utterly, and possessed so little of a mother's feeling, or any human feeling, as to desert them, even *kill* them.

This is a horrible truth, to which Jane Cameron confessed; but it is the whole truth, notwithstanding. The cases of infanticide which shock us in the pages of the public press are many, but the cases which never find their way into the papers—successful cases—are equal to, if not in excess of, the crimes that have been brought to daylight.

A heartless woman soon tires of the child which sin has brought into the world: she is poor, and has her living to get—honest or dishonest—away from home. Ere the child is born, she has dwelt on this, weighed the consequences, and prepared her plans, and the life is taken with but little compunction, and no one any the wiser, perhaps.

"Better out o' the way," is the consolation afforded to the conscience, and a little body is found in the Clyde, or has died of suffocation in the night, and the line is hard to draw between accident and murder.

Jane Cameron—very poor and a very bad character, clinging to this child's memory as she had clung heretofore to the child—was a paradox; they reasoned with her, they laughed at her, they "*made game of her.*" But for a while she continued to grieve, and her wickedness was of a new character—something akin to desperation.

She still walked the streets, and drank like no other woman—it was all a temporary insanity, to which her friends objected, and which led them by degrees to drop her company. She was reckless, talked too much of matters that should have been kept dark, and assumed too often a defiant position, which was bad policy, and must inevitably turn the key upon her once more. In these fits, Jane's room was better than her company; and, if she only got herself into trouble, it would not matter so much.

Mrs. Cameron argued and quarrelled with her daughter to but little purpose. She scolded her, blasphemed at her, shook her fist in her face, when "the custom" dropped off; no one would work with them whilst Jane's tongue ran so

glibly. But Jane was no longer a child, and could take her own part now.

The baby had been dead a month when Jane and her mother had their last quarrel—came to blows upon the old subject of advice given and contemptuously disregarded.

"I'll stand nane o' yer nansense now," cried Jane; "I'm na the gal to be half starved and half murdered any mair. Who sent for ye?"

"What wud ye hae been without me, ye hussy?"

"Get oot o' the hoose-place—this is my hoose and ye shall na stap any longer."

"The sooner I gae awa' the better."

"Yes."

"Then gang your ain gait, and see how soon they'll lock ye up in the prison again."

Mrs. Cameron, indignant at her daughter's disobedience and open rebellion, gathered the few things that she possessed into a bundle, and left Jane to the entire possession of her room in the Old Vennel.

Jane enjoyed the change for a day or two; then the solitariness of her position became unen-

durable, and the expenses of keeping herself and paying fifteen-pence a week with her own fugitive earnings suggested reflection and a change of tactics, if "luck" did not turn. Still there was a morbid satisfaction in being entirely on her own account—left to her own resources, with not a single pal to work with or for her. It was a change, and varied life a little.

With no one to quarrel, and with the responsibility of a "house" on her hands, Jane Cameron suddenly assumed a more quiet demeanour, and worked for herself in a cooler and more practical manner. She was "sent to Coventry" by her associates in crime; they were afraid of her, and would not work with her. Her mother, whom she met in the streets very frequently, would not condescend to address a word to her, and Jane flaunted by with her head very high in the air, and made no effort to a renewal of acquaintance.

She grew tired of Glasgow, felt herself too well known there, and too unsettled, after all that had happened, to remain. One morning she made up her mind to proceed to Edinburgh and try her

fortunes in the sister city, and started suddenly and without warning for the "modern Athens."

She had only a few shillings in her pocket—too little capital in hand to afford the expense of a railway journey, so she walked the distance barefoot, reaching Edinburgh in two days. This was her first departure from her native town; she tired of her change of quarters very rapidly.

In the closes of the old town she found almost as many disreputable characters; and, before the night was over on which she had first arrived, she had discovered a dancing "skeel," and patronized it in the hope of making fresh acquaintances there. Acquaintances were made; she was introduced to Edinburgh society, and began life there in her old wicked fashion. She even obtained work for awhile in a factory at the back of High Street, but during this time she was away from all that she considered home, and the Edinburgh thieves were too fine for her—even jeered at her accent! Besides, the chances were against her succeeding in life here; she had lost most of her good looks, and it was no use wandering about the new town, or attempting to lure the

rich folk from Princes Street, across the bridges, to the closes in the old. The old town was too distinctly separated from the new, and they were principally shopkeepers who were robbed in the former. There were occasionally sailors from Leith and Granton in the old town, but there was too much competition for *them*; and it was not like Glasgow, where ships came right to the Broomielaw, and English, Spanish, and American seamen, with their pockets full of bank-notes, thronged the High Street and Salt-market, and were to be picked up very frequently. Distance lent enchantment to the view, and the native city had its attractions now that she was away from it.

She knew every turning, court, wynd, and close in Glasgow; and Glasgow was home, where she had been born, lived, and been imprisoned—where her baby had died. She was losing a chance in this place; there was only one Glasgow thief in all Edinburgh, and he had come there "out of the way," and not as a matter of speculation; but there were plenty of Edinburgh thieves

in Glasgow, which proved that the latter was the better place.

She was unsettled and restless—that spirit which preys upon all who live by crime urged her away from her new home, before she had been a month located there. It is this spirit which renders the monotonous discipline of a prison so hard to fight against. Perhaps it is a grave mistake which has lately been asserted, that prisoners do not care for prison. Its confinement has no terrors, but its monotony has, and the comfort of a prison is as nothing in the balance with the horror of a life measured by the square and rule. To the dissolute and dissatisfied it is a living death; and old prison-birds never get used to prison life in their hearts, however lightly they may affect to regard it.

The curse of unrest which follows a criminal career and attends upon it, led Jane Cameron to turn her back upon Edinburgh.

"I felt quite a happy woman again when I found mysel in the Salt-market, and saw the auld shops aboot me."

Whether absence had made the heart grow

fond, or greater confidence was placed in Jane, seeing how long she had escaped the law, certain it is that Jane's appearance was received with satisfaction, and offers were made to take her into partnership from more than one eligible quarter. Jane accepted the best offer, and worked with a will for the new gang—worked on till she was fifteen-and-a-half years of age without a fresh sentence—gaining what she called a "prize" once or twice in that period—a prize of stolen bank-notes, which allowed three or four weeks' idleness, and a silk dress and bonnet like a lady, for steam-boat travelling up the Clyde on a Sunday—a matter which was exciting the serious mind of Glasgow at that period, and causing public meetings for and against the measure. Mary Loggie came from prison again unregenerate, and joined this new gang—which was a "lucky" one, and envied by those gangs less fortunate—and the old friendship was once more revived between them.

Jane Cameron only saw her for a few days: it resembled a law of oscillation, which shut up one

and liberated the other: they were never moving long together in the same groove.

Jane Cameron was again arrested on a charge of robbery, and she and her male companions went to a higher court on this occasion. Jane Cameron expected a long sentence—twelve months of it at least—but her heart sank and her head swam when she was adjudged to suffer imprisonment for two years. There were well-known faces in the court, and she kept a brave front till the last, departing even with an impudent curtsey from the presence of her judge. But in her cell she clasped her hands together, and shuddered at the thoughts of two long years of prison life.

CHAPTER XX.

OLD QUARTERS.

JANE CAMERON went back to Glasgow Prison outwardly cool and philosophical. She had had "her fling"—a longer lease of liberty than the majority of her companions, and she forced herself to believe that it was *her* turn, and so to be put up with, amongst the contingencies of a thief's life.

It was a dark prospect ahead of her, but she must make the best of it. Some women whom she knew made the worst of it, and went in raging and defiant, resisted all authority, and spent half their term in the dark cell, subsisting on bread and water. Though she was a hasty woman, she disliked dark cells, objected to bread and water,

and had therefore resolved always to be quiet and orderly in her *prison life.* This rule, as she became more desperate and violent, she did not abide by, as I may have occasion to remark at a later period in her memoirs. But at this time Jane Cameron's behaviour was exemplary: she was a quiet, orderly prisoner, obeying the rules almost cheerfully, and doing her allotted share of work in a brisk manner; she never complained, made no excuse to get to the infirmary, was civil and respectful to her female warders, but was very cold, hard, and inflexible for all that.

She had made up her mind not to be impressed by the chaplain this time, not to be worried about her fallen state any more—*to try and think of something else* whilst he was talking to her, if possible. Praying and preaching had only rendered her unhappy—done her no good, for she had begun the old life, and was resolved to begin it again directly the law lost its power to hold her longer in its grasp.

I believe the Scotch law does not admit of a sentence so long as two years being spent in Glasgow Prison, but certain it is that Jane

Cameron was not removed from that place of confinement during the whole period of her sentence. Perth Prison was scarcely in existence then, as the last stage of a female criminal's career—the improvements which have constituted that prison one of the finest buildings in the United Kingdom had not been commenced, I believe—and long-sentenced criminals were passed over to the London prisons.

In all prisons, at that period, it is possible that there was a dearth of space, and hence Jane Cameron's long stay in the old battle-ground, on which she had fought the Tempter once and believed that she had beaten him, till the world was faced again, and she gave way at the first shock.

She did not play the hypocrite and profess amendment: she listened to good advice, and preserved a stoical demeanour; but there was no power in chaplain, Scripture-reader, matron, to touch her now. It was their duty to preach and her duty to listen, and there the bargain ended. She had hardened, and there was no power to soften her.

Kindness would have had its effect—not that the officers were unkind; far from it—but there was no one to feel any particular interest in her above that of the general body, or whose especial task it became to study her strange character, or endeavour to understand it. They were all too busy in Glasgow Prison; she received the usual amount of attention, nothing more; and there was no one to whom she took a prisoner's fancy—that strange fancy, which can be worked on for much good.

She was an old prisoner now—hers was a well-known face, and any signs of reformation were not expected from *her*. A face that periodically appears there is the face of a "professional," from whom nothing but obedience is expected. There are a few set phrases about sorrow at seeing that face again, and then the prisoner proceeds with her duties, and no one pays her any more attention than to see that she is locked up, and does her work in a proper manner.

Jane Cameron was a prisoner whose custody involved no extra trouble upon her warders (I

have already remarked that the officers are called female warders, in lieu of matrons, in the Scotch prisons), and therefore a prisoner who worked well. The monotony of her existence she fought against; she counted the days, even the hours of her bondage, and felt that a certain amount of weight was off her mind with every week which dragged its slow length along. She registered the week by little bits of tinsel on which shirt buttons had been sewn, by the printed labels from cotton-reels, and placed them under the prison window, where they served for ornamentation of her cell, and could be easily counted. Neglectful in her home, she was scrupulously neat in her cell, which was another seeming anomaly in her conduct until she explained it.

"There was na keepin' a 'home' in the Vennel clean: I gave it up at ance, but a cell did luke tidy, and was warth the trooble."

To her warder at Glasgow Prison she said once—

"Oh, for a place as big and clean as this for fifteen-pence a week in Glasgie!"

And again, which tells its own moral—

"If we all had a room to our ainsel' like this,

we should na get into half the trooble, and many o' us would ne'er gae bad at a'."

She was proud of her cell, although she hated it—although the filth and foul air of a room in the Vennel would have been Paradise to her in comparison. The separate system was not invariably carried out with her during the term of her imprisonment. The gaol became over-full again, and finally another prisoner was placed in her cell—one of the sly, bad sort, with whom notes could be compared, and advice in matters nefarious given and received. This prisoner was ten years the senior of Jane, and serving out a less sentence for a similar offence, which Jane Cameron, with abnormal ideas of justice, thought one of the greatest shames of which she had ever heard.

Jane had known her in Glasgow—met her frequently at all the usual haunts, but the woman had looked upon Jane as too young for a companion, and treated her always like a child. They had not exchanged many words with each other before prison life threw them together, and then their friendship made rapid advances.

In the night-time they were accustomed to

whisper together the anecdotes of their past life, their reminiscences of a criminal career. Jane's experience staggered Miss Ryan, who had commenced late in life, her earlier years having been spent as a domestic servant at an hotel in Buchanan Street, where she was tempted to steal, and where the life began which ends ever the same way, with but few exceptions to the rule.

Ann Ryan's term of imprisonment expired within a month of Jane's. It was agreed between them that they should take a room together; that Jane, who departed first, should look out for her, and that they would "pal in" and try for better luck next time. Jane told her of Mary Loggie, whom she knew by sight and name also, and how glad Mary would be to join them, if she did not get into trouble meanwhile. These two women speculated on the brightness of their future, on their plans of action—every night after they were supposed to be asleep—on the hopes that lay in the future for them both. Ann Ryan alluded more than once to America; what an opening there was for people with their wits about them across the Atlantic, and how if they could save—that is, steal—enough money

to pay their passages out, they would turn their backs upon Glasgow, and go down the Clyde to seek their fortune in the New World. They talked so often of going to America, that it became a settled project at last, and their speculation took a wide range, and extended to their plans of operation in New York, where they would begin afresh; and, if apprehended, why, sentence would begin afresh too, and there would be no years of imprisonment for "merely picking the pocket of a man who was not wise enough to take care of his money."

Jane Cameron was a woman who had the prisoner's usual grievance: she had not been sentenced fairly, but had been treated with an extra degree of harshness. Everybody had "been down upon her." If it had been anybody else, she would not have had half such a sentence; but the bailie, the sheriff, the police—none of them treated her fairly, she considered at that time. It is always the misfortune of a prisoner never to be sentenced by the particular magistrate or judge for whom she has a preference, or, if tried by her favourites, sentence is to be passed upon

her at the very period when those favourites are out of temper and in unmerciful moods.

These wolves of society have all their complaints to make against the law; they are never content with the justice that has been meted out to them. A catalogue of their grievances would form an interesting volume. The world would be amazed at the number of wrongs they who have warred with it for life are ready to charge against it, and what a stern belief they have in the truth of their statements. In their own ideas they are an injured and ill-used class, and hardly dealt with. Society is much too severe upon them, and treats them very unfairly, on the whole!

CHAPTER XXI.

A PRISON VISIT.

JANE CAMERON had been seven or eight months in prison when she was surprised by the receipt of a letter. She had learned to read a little by this time, and to write after a certain fashion which is peculiar to prisoners. Still she had not advanced so far in her education as to be able to decipher the contents of an ill-written, ill-spelt epistle. Her companion, who was a better scholar than she, and had received a smattering of decent education, with some difficulty made it out for Jane.

"It's from your mother."

"My mither!"

The letter had been opened, and, of course,

read by the authorities of the prison, then passed through the trap in the door to Jane, with the words, "Here's a letter for you, Cameron."

And the letter, which was quite an event in this still life—this unnaturally still life of Jane Cameron—what did it contain? It was a strange epistle, and puzzled Jane with its affection and its religious element, until the thought suggested itself that Mrs. Cameron had written for the authorities as well as for her daughter.

It began by hoping that her dear daughter was well, as it left her at present, and by trusting that she had awakened to the error of her ways, and had had time given her to think of a better life. It thanked Heaven that the writer was doing pretty well, and regretted her daughter's absence very much, although she had no doubt that all was for the best, and that the daughter was very kindly treated. The mother wrote to say that she was going abroad in a few weeks—that she had saved money enough to buy a passage out for America, and that she had heard from the *good gentleman* who had been kind enough to write to her and offer her the management of a *little*

business, which he had started in New York. She expressed a wish to see her daughter before she went away, if Jane would ask permission of those authorities who had been kind to her, and let her know on what day she might be allowed to call and see her at the prison. And she was her ever-loving and affectionate mother, JANE CAMERON.

This was the purport of the letter, the language altered a little from the original text, and much profanity in the mention of Scripture names omitted. When Ann Ryan had mastered the epistle, Jane stared vacantly at her, and finally burst into a fit of laughter at the solemnity of the maternal address.

"She's gane mad!"

It was like madness at first sight, but the "method" in it was apparent after a while. Jane was touched then by her mother's wish to see her before she went abroad; strangely anxious to meet that mother, and even thank her for this sudden awakening of her interest. Jane Cameron's life in prison had not been broken in upon by friendly visits—gleams of light across the darkened way, that are so dearly prized by those prisoners who

have friends honest enough to gain an entry. Jane seemed not to possess a friend in the world; Mary Loggie would have come had she not been well known, and been debarred by her peculiar profession, and there was no one else to take the trouble to care about *her*. She was alone in the world, and prison was a more monotonous sphere to her than to the convicts by whom she was surrounded.

But here was a break in her life, if they would allow her mother to come in. Her mother bore not the best of characters in the town, but she had never been locked up in Glasgow Prison, and the law regarded her as an innocent woman. Permission was granted to the daughter to see the mother, and Jane Cameron was allowed to *write* her first letter to her mother, giving her all the necessary information.

Jane Cameron was strangely excited about this coming visit. Had Mrs. Cameron been always the best and kindest of mothers, she could not have felt a greater desire to see her. The day appointed for the interview seemed as if it would never come—it was like a holiday a long

way off to a school-girl. It was an odd sensation to be waiting anxiously for the mother—to feel, for the first time in her life, almost an affection for her. She was grateful to her for writing, for offering to pay her a visit, for affording her all that pleasurable excitement which was new to her, and made her confused and wandering.

Such was the influence of confinement upon Cameron, that she, whose life had been the stormiest, and who had mixed with the wildest and most dissolute—who had been the most wild and dissolute of her sex herself—was now building on a short interview with her mother behind an iron grating. "I never could quite mak' it oot what I wanted to see her for—why I should care aboot seein' her. I think I must hae been gangin' sillie as fast as I could gae."

The day of the interview came at last, and Jane Cameron at a respectful distance, and with a watchful auditor, was allowed to see Mrs. Cameron. That lady must have been prospering lately, for her appearance stupefied her daughter, she was so well and brightly dressed. Mother and daughter looked at each other, and were upon their guard

concerning the past life—they spoke of the new life for the former in New York, the city to which Jane had thought of proceeding when there was a chance of earning the passage-money. Mrs. Cameron talked enigmatically about her business, which, from a peculiar expression in her eyes, Jane could read was akin to the old business which had been carried on in the Vennel, &c.

"I'll write to Post Office, Glasgie, when I'm settled," said the mother; "if there's a chance for ye, I'll tell ye o' it."

"Thankee," answered Jane.

"Me and the gude mon hae made up matters again; he finds he canna get on without me, and sae he sends a freend to Glasgie to ask me to come after him—a freend who was comin' this wa' in a ship."

Jane wanted to learn her mother's New York address, but the old lady avoided so leading a question as long as possible; and then, when pressed home, confessed to not knowing the address yet awhile, which was without doubt a falsehood.

The twenty minutes, or the half hour—I am not quite certain what is the length of time allowed at Glasgow Prison—was up at last, and Mrs. Cameron was informed of that fact.

"Well, gude bye, my dear. It's a lang journey I'm ganging, and who knows whether I shall e'er see ye agin? If ye stap in Glasgie, tak' care o' yersel', Jennie."

Even with this depraved woman—the woman who had never been kind to her—it was a cruel parting. The circumstances around her at the time made the parting hard, and, had the mother been all that was good, amiable, and affectionate, Jane Cameron could not have given way more, or cried more bitterly. Mrs. Cameron was taken aback by this burst of feeling; she did not understand it, for she deserved it not, and she remained staring at Jane, open-mouthed and horror-stricken at this evidence of weakness in her daughter, who had always been "such a limb."

"What I cried for," was Jane's remark, "puzzled me afterwards as muckle as my mither." In the night, when she thought it all over, and

recalled the bewildered look on her mother's countenance, she sat up in bed and laughed outright at the incident till she woke Ann Ryan, who thought she had gone mad in the night.

Still the interview affected Cameron for a week at least; she could not forget it, or her mother's desire to see her before she went away. It had been a break in her prison thoughts, and it rendered her for awhile restless and dissatisfied. It was a task to settle down again, and she regretted that she had not asked more than one pal to write a letter about something, just to relieve the feeling of loneliness which pressed upon her prison hours.

The mother went away to New York; that part of her story was removed from fiction at least. From that time she passed away from the daughter's sight completely. Jane never heard from her again; no letter was ever written to Glasgow that reached the hands of the daughter; whether she died on the passage out, or lives still, or is immured in the New York prisons, Jane has never had a possibility of ascertaining.

It was their last parting on earth, and there came a time when Jane Cameron felt grateful that it had not been characterized by dark looks or angry words.

"We parted freends, and I'm vera glad noo," Jane said years afterwards.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SECOND LETTER.

ANN RYAN was removed to another cell for reasons which no one took the trouble to explain to Jane Cameron, and the latter was left "in solitary" once more.

This was a grave and a great loss to our heroine —a change that was disheartening in the extreme. The return to her own thoughts, her own companionship, was horrible after this; she became low-spirited, and even fretted after her "pal."

With all her hardness, stoicism, and dark thoughts, Jane Cameron's mind must have been naturally weak to have felt the loss of this new companion so acutely. It was not that she entertained an affection for Ann Ryan—for, when

they met afterwards in the Glasgow streets, and kept their promise of living together, they did not agree very well, Ryan being conceited and opinionated — but it was missing the face and voice of a fellow-captive which rendered the place more lonely and depressing.

She received a message from her once during the time that they remained apart—a message mysteriously flung through the open trap of her door by a prisoner who had been taken from a cell on special service, and found that opportunity to pass in the note that had been surreptitiously written by Ryan.

The freemasonry amongst prisoners goes on here as elsewhere whenever an occasion presents itself, which is not often, where the system is separate.

Jane read the letter and destroyed it.

"Don't forget to look out for us in the High Street about September."

This was all that the message conveyed, and Jane understood it, and was grateful to Ryan for the trouble she had taken.

Cameron became so tired of her own society

that she resolved to make an effort to reach the infirmary, where company might be expected. But her health was well established, and, as it was her first attempt at deception, she failed in the effort, and was reprimanded by the doctor.

This angered her, and she felt for the first time a strange temptation to break out—to insult her officer, who was a quiet, taciturn girl, to whom Jane Cameron had taken a dislike. But she kept her temper during the whole of her imprisonment at Glasgow. Once or twice it was nearly overpowering her, but she had a terror of the dark cell, and the bread-and-water diet supplied to the refractory there, and it outlived her Glasgow life at least. There came another letter to break the monotony of her existence, signed, "Mary Canton," which perplexed her till she read the whole of the epistle.

The letter was a strange missive, giving her more surprising news than that which her mother had startled her with, two or three months ago. Mary Loggie was married, and, what was more, married to a carpenter. There was no address to the letter, for Mary had possibly wished to

keep as much in the dark as possible, but it gave the news plainly and truthfully, and Jane spelt the letter over and over again, and wondered how it had all come about, and for what reason a carpenter had taken it into his head to marry Mary Loggie.

Still there was the fact—Mary was married! She had written to her old companion in evil, apprising her of the extraordinary news, stating that she was proud of her husband, and intended to make him a good wife, and never go bad any more. She wrote to hope that Jane Cameron would amend as she had done, and that she would pardon her for saying that she gave up all past acquaintances from that day forth. She was very happy, and her husband was very kind.

Jane did not know what to make of this story during the remainder of her two years—minus the time deducted from her sentence. For a long while she did not believe it, and set it down to a piece of jesting on Mary Loggie's part, "a game" played off upon her and the prison authorities, who had read the letter before her.

Every day she read Mary's letter along with her mother's; that was part of her daily occupation. A prisoner never tires of reading the letters that have been sent her from the world without; they are records treasured with much care—very often preserved during the whole term of sentence, and carried out of prison as precious relics. I say very often, for if the prisoner be a "refractory"—a breaking-out woman—the letters are torn up with the rest of destructible things, and are the articles always mourned over when the sober hour of reason returns.

"Oh! my poor letters—what a fool I was to go tearing *them* up!" is the mournful cry over the past fury which has deprived the prisoner of one solace in captivity.

When she got away from prison, thought Jane, she would find out all about it; but the more she reflected on the matter and studied it, the more improbable it seemed that there could be anything save a jest implied by Mary's missive. She wished for liberty to solve the riddle—in her prison cell, she gave it up.

And in that prison cell the hand-marks upon

the wall increased in number, the seasons went their course—spring, summer, autumn, winter—spring, and summer, and autumn again, and she nearing freedom now, becoming strangely excited about it, and wondering what Glasgow streets would be like, and who would be there to welcome her back to them.

Oh! for the streets once more of dear auld Glasgie!—the closes, wynds and vennels, the dancing-school, the sing-song, the Salt-market, the Bridge-gate on the Saturday night, and all the restless life therein, from which she had been immured. No better thoughts—no brighter hopes than those! The soul still in the darkness—and that darkness growing denser beyond the prison cell, where she had heard God's Word, and closed her heart against it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MARY LOGGIE'S ROMANCE.

BACK once more amongst the old companions, Jane's first question was concerning Mary Loggie. Had any one seen her lately? Had she been playing a trick upon her? Had any one heard anything of a carpenter?

There had been rumours flying about the closes concerning Mary Loggie, and her withdrawal from the old profession. No one had seen her lately, and her sisters and brothers, who were still in Glasgow, professed equal ignorance. Most of the thieves had heard of her having married a carpenter at the other end of the town; but no one believed *that* story. That was a "bit of bounce" on Mary Loggie's part; she had got

amongst a fresh lot across bridge—probably the water-thieves—men who lurk about the river in boats, or hang about the wharves, and see what is to be picked up when sailors' backs are turned; or else Mary Loggie had talked over some drunken fellow, and was keeping house for him for awhile, until he tired of her, and kicked her into the street, or she tired of him, and made off one fine night, with the saleable contents of the establishment. They should hear of her presently, and meanwhile they were not curious concerning her movements; she was a terrible liar at the best of times.

Jane Cameron proceeded to business in a cautious manner. Prison life was more objectionable to her than to the majority of her contemporaries—she feared it more. She was losing a chance, her "pals" told her; but she had learned caution in a hard school; and the thief is always careful for the first few weeks after a long sentence. Jane Cameron was on her guard for the first few months, and therefore lived hard.

Ann Ryan had come out of prison by this time, and had joined Jane and two others in a "house"

in a close; but Ann Ryan's "style" was somewhat objectionable, and they did not agree very well. Ann Ryan, as already stated, was opinionated, and was always proffering advice.

"She got the upper hand somehow," was Jane Cameron's remark; "try all we could, there was na keeping her doon."

Ann Ryan had had a better education than those she consorted with, and was proud of her superiority. From all that I ever learned of Cameron, this Ryan was a clever thief, of whom the rest were jealous.

She was fond of disguises—shifting from silks to rags, according to the locality which she intended to patronize for the night, and seldom returning home without some spoil unlawfully acquired.

If she lured any one to the close, the drink was brought out, the "sleepy stuff" was dropped into the whiskey, the man was robbed, carried down stairs at a convenient hour, and left in the court, or up the common stair of another close, and no one heard any more of the result.

"He was sure to wake up dazed, and ne'er ken

where he had been taken to—it happens every nicht in Glasgie. Trooble did come out o' it now and then, not alwa'."

Trouble came out of it to Jane Cameron, as will be presently seen—the greatest trouble of her life, and yet the trouble that in its own way, and after some years, led to so much that gave a turn to her character.

Jane Cameron had been out of prison three or four months—it was the depth of winter, and she was seventeen years of age, and looked five-and-twenty—when one morning she met Mary Loggie on Hutcheson's Bridge. Jane had strayed that way in a listless fashion—she had had a headache from deep drinking yesternight, and had ventured forth in search of fresh air, when she came face to face with the old friend.

The old friend was well but plainly dressed, and there was so quiet and *new* a look upon her face, that Jane did not recognize her until she had passed her. When she had gone by, Jane felt a little aggrieved at the "cut direct," and turned and looked after her. Mary Loggie had increased her pace, as though she had been afraid of Jane

following her; but Cameron merely stood on the pavement, and gazed at the receding figure of her whom she had liked best in the world. At this moment Mary Loggie looked over her shoulder, paused, and then turned and came rapidly back.

"Jennie!"

"Mary!"

Jennie shook the outstretched hand of the past friend, and continued to stare at the transformation before her—the Glasgow street-walker and thief metamorphosed to the decently-clad, quiet-looking woman. It was a mystery hard to guess at, but Jane Cameron believed the story that Mary Loggie had written to her then.

"How ye're altered!" she gasped.

"Ay. Coom this wa' ower the bridge, and let me talk to ye a bit."

Jane crossed the bridge with Mary Loggie, and the *ci-devant* pals turned to the left, towards the Broomielaw.

"It's a' true then, Mary?"

"That I'm married? ay!"

"How did ye manage it? How was it that ye

dropped into luck's way like that, and got a raal honest man to marry ye?"

"It was strange. I never deserved it, Jennie."

Somewhat exultingly, Mary Loggie told the story—which, being a strange one, and illustrative of a sudden turn from evil to good, may be worth the dwelling upon in this place.

Whilst Jane Cameron was serving her time at Glasgow Prison, Mary Loggie had taken to cotton-spinning again—hands had been wanted, the trade of thieving had been slack, and Mary joined the mill-hands.

Here she became acquainted with a poor little factory girl—a delicate child, of ten or eleven years of age. This child fainted away one day in the mill, and, after recovering from her stupor, was too ill to continue her work for the day. Feeling still very faint, Mary accompanied the child to her mother's house, whereat was lodging at that period the carpenter who took a sudden fancy to Mary. The carpenter was out of work and at home, and a conversation ensued between him and Mary before the latter went back to the mill. He was a middle-aged Englishman, who

had recently crossed the Tweed in search of better fortune, Mary ascertained; and he had hoped, in Glasgow, to find some distant relatives, who, however, had contrived to elude his search.

Mary was a native of Glasgow, and might recollect some one of the name—and Mary recollected one or two people in the city who bore the very name which he had been anxious to discover. The next day he met her coming from the mill, and told her that he had called to thank her for her information—that in Gorbals, whither Mary had sent him, he had alighted upon one second cousin, who was likely to find work for him in a week or two. So the intimacy commenced, and Mr. Simmons, the carpenter, began to cross Mary Loggie's path with a suspicious frequency. Mary did not understand it for a while; he was a plain, matter-of-fact man, who paid no compliments, and put one or two awkward questions to Mary, that were difficult to answer. One day he asked her where she was living—how she managed to live on the money earned at the cotton-mill. Mary told him that she went shares in one room down a close, and that she had no relations in

the world. When he informed her that he was a widower, and had had one little child, who had died before it was five years old, Mary began to suspect that he had taken a fancy to her; and when he asked her one afternoon if she would go to church with him next Sunday, she felt ready to burst out crying, with a strange, new sense of happiness.

It was all true; a steady and industrious man had taken to her, knowing nothing of her guilty antecedents. There were no heroic qualities in Mary Loggie—she was not courageous enough to tell the truth, or afford even a glimpse of the truth, when there was no longer any doubt of Mr. Simmons's intentions. There was even a concentrative selfishness in wishing to be his wife at any hazard, and in chancing the *dénouement* which, whilst she remained in Glasgow, might happen at any moment. Still she was an ignorant girl, and the temptation was great. It was the inducement of leading an honest life, becoming an honest woman—and that was a new and strange temptation, which was irresistible. She did not think of blighting his life, only of changing her own.

Let me add in her favour, that this man had won her heart—that the honest middle-aged man had flattered her by his affection, and wrought a revolution in every thought of hers. If she married him, she felt certain that she could make him happy, and settle down to his quiet home; and if he never found out the truth, she and he would lead a very happy life together.

She was afraid to be seen at night in the High Street after that, lest he should meet her there and see who were her associates. She gave up stealing, and feigned illness, in order to keep within doors—she took the first opportunity of leaving the close in which she had been located, and taking shelter with honest poverty by way of a change. Every hour away from him was a suspense; every time she met him she expected that he would tell her that he had discovered the truth, and never wished to see her again. But he suspected nothing; he believed her story about being alone in the world; he took pity upon her desolateness, and he asked her one day to be his wife.

Mary Loggie accepted him—married him, and they took a room on the Gorbals side of Hutche-

son's Bridge, where they had lived ever since, and where Mary Loggie would have been wholly happy, had not the shadow of the one fear ever beset her.

"I dinna cross the bridge mair aften than I can help, Jane, for fear o' meetin the auld faces. And I would gae twa miles oot o' my wa rather than gae down High Street," said Mary.

"Ye're sorry eno' to see me then, Mary?"

"I'd rather see ye than any ane else. Ye will na tell o' me?"

"Na fa the wurld."

They remained talking together for some time, and then Mary Loggie did a very foolish thing, considering that she was afraid of the "auld acquaintance"—of the byegones following her up and denouncing her. She was proud of her new position in life, and she had confidence in Jane Cameron. Jane Cameron had been always her friend, one in whom she could trust—she felt a desire to take Jane home during her husband's absence, and show her what a nice comfortable room she had.

Just for once—if Jane would come, before they

parted for ever! Jane hesitated, more for Mary Loggie's sake than her own; but Mary pressed the invitation upon her. There was nothing to fear—her husband would not be home till one o'clock; so the friends turned back, crossed the bridge, and went on to Mary Loggie's lodging.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MARY'S HOME.

MRS. SIMMONS, *née* Loggie, rented apartments in a small house at the back of Pelham Street. She had put the Clyde between her and the old haunts; to live "over the water" was at least some sort of security.

Mary, in her neatly-trimmed bonnet and decent dress, was a strange contrast to the bare-headed, loosely-clad companion at her side. Jane suggested, as they walked along, that she was hardly fit for her now.

"Hoot awa'—I'm na at hame wi' a bonnet on yet, Jennie," she replied; adding, "Here's the hoose, and there's nane to meet us and speer aboot ye."

Mary opened the door with her key, and the two old "pals" went upstairs to the room on the first floor—a large room, forming "bedroom, parlour and all"—plainly furnished, but, in its size and general appearance, a palace to the astonished eyes of Cameron.

"There, Jenny, is na that a bonnie hoose?"

"*It just be!*" replied Jane.

"Sit down and tak a good luke at it—luke at the carpet, and the roses on the wall, lassie."

Jane sat down, rested her hands on her knees, and looked round her very attentively.

"Faith, Mary, ye are a lucky girl," she gasped at last.

"It's na like the Vennel."

"Naethin' like it—naethin'.

Jane's description of this new "hoose," of her feelings at the sight of it, of the envy that stole into her heart and disturbed her equanimity, I should have liked to set down in her own broad Scotch accent—it affords an insight into that natural character which adverse circumstances had warped and distorted.

She felt as if she would have liked to have had

a good cry at Mary's luck—then aggrieved Mary should have attained to such an emin above her, and been made an honest woma doing so little to deserve it. There was a l in her throat which she thought would s cate her, and her knees knocked together strange manner that was altogether unacc able. Here was the contrast between ho and vice, and she felt how far she had dr away from all that was good and praisewo and how past praying and hoping for she wa

"I ne'er kenned how vera bad I was that day," she confessed; "and what made feel sae savage for a week was, that J Loggie had na deserved it."

Still Jane Cameron was not an envious and, the first pangs over, her evil temper sided, and she congratulated Mary, in her fashion, upon the rise in life for her. Mary, who had strangely altered for the be laughed and cried, told Jane of her fears the truth should escape, and her husband her out of doors, spoke of her love for this fiding, hard-working, earnest man, whom

was trying to deserve by a new and exemplary life.

It was not a story of everyday occurrence—the moral was at least a bad one for Jane Cameron, who saw an old acquaintance raised to the greatness of being a carpenter's wife without an effort on her own part. Repentance for the past came after the "good luck"—"any ane might hae turned better in sic a hame," added Cameron.

They spent a long while together; it was to be their last meeting, and Mary had a great deal to tell her—of her fears in particular, lest her sisters should call upon her and assert their relationship, or her brothers should discover her whereabouts. The time sped on without much heed being taken; there was Mary's set of best china tea-things to inspect, her Sunday gown for "kirk," her shoes for Sunday, the real bed which she had to lie on now. The bed was not quite all their property yet—it was being paid for in weekly instalments, but they were getting on, and her "auld man, God bless him!" had been in full work for the last thirteen weeks.

And, in the midst of Mary's display of household treasures to her enrapt observer, Mr. Simmons came home ten minutes before his time, and found a Glasgie lassie sitting on the edge of a chair, talking to his young wife.

"That's his step," Mary had said when his feet were heard coming up the stairs. "My God, Jennie, sit ye still, and say naethin, or it's a' up wi' me!"

Jane's last remnant of envy or discontent vanished away, and fear for Mary was the sole sensation remaining. She felt that she could have done anything for Mary Loggie's sake—told any falsehood to screen her from discovery, and keep her from returning to that dark life whence she had emerged. "But I felt it war a narro squeak then, and my heart beat unco' fast."

Mr. Simmons entered—a middle-aged man, with a fierce expression of countenance, with iron-grey whiskers, and eyes that were very sharp and piercing—and looked hard at Jane Cameron, who rose, and in her embarrassment dropped a curtsey—the curtsey which she had been accustomed to make in Glasgow Prison to

the governor, chaplain, head warder, matron, and all visitors.

The carpenter stared at Jane's respectful demeanour, and then turned to his wife, who was standing by the mantel-piece looking as white as a ghost.

"This is Jennie Smith, who used to work wi' me at the cotton-mill, John," she said, suddenly dashing at an explanation; "I met her on the brig, and brought her hame to see my new hoose."

"How do you do, Miss Smith?" he said, nodding his head towards her; "sit down, my lass—you're welcome."

But Jane was only anxious to be gone before he should "get her face by heart," before any awkward questions should be asked, and one lie lead to another, until the whole false fabrication tottered over together. She was more con-

d than Mary, would have betrayed more to man inclined to be suspicious just then; but Mr. Simmons set it down to timidity and nervousness, and laughed very heartily at Jane's anxiety to depart.

"You need not be afraid of me, my girl," he

said, cheerfully; "I sha'n't eat you. Don't run away—don't run away, just as if I'd frightened you out of the house."

And so he had. Jane would listen to no entreaties to remain, but gathered her shawl around her, and made for the door and the staircase, without bidding even Mr. Simmons good day. Mary followed her in the passage, and caught our heroine by the arm; she was still white as death, with the horror of the fear that had beset her.

"Dinna coom again, Jennie—dinna ken me any mair, or I shall gae mad. Dinna tell ane that ye hae met me to-day."

She did not shut the door after Jane, but stood watching her down the street—making sure that every step took her farther and farther away from the home where discovery was death.

This was Mary Simmons's first trial—there was a second and worse ordeal to pass, as our next chapter will relate.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE END OF THE ROMANCE.

MARY SIMMONS must have experienced the feelings of Damocles during her stay in Glasgow. Large as the city was—boasting then its three or four hundred thousand inhabitants—it was not possible to thread the streets without occasionally meeting some one who belonged to the life she had abjured. Try how she might, and study how she might, a face or two occasionally would meet hers at which she recoiled, and the police on duty in the streets knew her still, and looked after her suspiciously, merely setting down her new aspect in society to a disguise by which society was to be more fully imposed on.

If her husband had left Glasgow all would

have been well, but he had found a means of living there, and was therefore inclined to remain. When Cameron had turned back with her to the Gorbals, Mary had told her how, on the preceding Sunday, her husband and she had walked down High Street, and how her heart had beaten with every step which took her along the old field of guilty action, and passed the entrances to the closes, whereat so many of the old companions were lingering. She passed through unrecognized; but it had been a terrible ordeal, and sooner or later she felt something must occur to dash down the screen between her and the truth. She was not a strong-minded woman, and had not the courage to confess all to her husband—she hoped against hope, and kept to her own side of the river as much as possible.

She had been close to the truth when her husband had come home, and found Jane Cameron there, but she hoped that she had escaped the revelation for ever after that—she was to see Jane Cameron no more, and her husband had faith in her.

But Cameron's part in the story was not played out yet, and there was another act to ensue.

It is by the merest chance in the world that this story of Mary Loggie's, stranger than fiction, finds its way into print. Full of her own trials and troubles, Cameron would have proceeded steadily onwards with the recapitulation of her own history, and have left the characters which flit across her story to sink away without an explanation.

"And what became of Mary Loggie?"

"Oh, she married!"

Had not the answer aroused her auditor's curiosity, the strange recital of a woman turned suddenly from evil would not have been afforded, and an interesting phase of human life been lost in consequence.

Mary Loggie's romance ended in this fashion:— One Saturday night, Mr. Simmons was walking up the Bridge-gate, when he came face to face with Jane Cameron. This was a month after the meeting with her at his own room; but his was a retentive memory, and he recognized her at once.

On her own ground, Jane Cameron objected to the recognition, and felt embarrassed by it.

Moreover, she was not alone, but in company with Ann Ryan, who was dressed "Glasgie fashin," with a shawl over her head. About both girls there was something suspicious that evening—their hair was glossy with pomatum, their cheeks had a tinge of artificial colouring, and there was a boldness in their looks, telling unmistakably of the cruel life of the streets.

Mr. Simmons stared at Jane, and then stopped, saying—

"Jennie Smith!"

Jane stammered out "Mr. Simmons," and asked after Mary.

"She's quite well—where are you going so late at night?"

"Only a little way."

He looked from her to Ann Ryan, who, seeing nothing unusual in this salutation, and accustomed to all degrees of company, asked if he would stand a wee drop of whiskey that cold February night. Jane jerked her away by the arm, but it was too late; Mr. Simmons's eyes distended at the remark, and at the impudent look by which it had been accompanied—the

uspicion of the honesty of his companions settled n his face at once.

"I never drink whiskey," he replied; "good ight!"

"Oh! gude nicht to ye fa a skinflint," cried nn Ryan, and appended to the remark a peal f derisive laughter, till Cameron began shaking er in the public streets.

"Ye're a fule, ye alwa' wa a fule," cried Jane; 'let the mon be. He's na our sort—he's aethin' to do wi' us."

Jane did not offer an explanation more explicit; or Mary's sake, that would not have been politic. She dismissed the subject abruptly, and refused o say one word more on the question, much to Ann Ryan's dissatisfaction, whose curiosity had been aroused by the eccentric behaviour of her companion.

But Mr. Simmons's curiosity had been also aroused by the demeanour of the two girls whom he had accosted: one was his wife's friend, and had been known to visit his house, and he was a man who would keep his house pure. His suspicions *had* been aroused, and, if Jane were a

character unfit to associate with his wife, why, the sooner he ascertained that fact for himself, the better. He followed Cameron and Ryan on the opposite side of the way, and in a very little while had ascertained for himself the characters of the two women whom he had set himself to watch.

He saw them accost strangers in the street; meet disreputable men, who had "thief" stamped upon their villanous countenances; enter the drinking-shops, and talk and laugh with all assembled there: finally, he addressed a policeman, and pointed out Cameron to him.

"Do you know that woman?" he asked.

"Ay, to be sure."

"What character does she bear about here?"

"A bad ain—nane worse, I reckon."

"And her companion?"

"About as bad—hae ye lost anythin'?"

"No, no; but I wished to know her character."

"They're na been a lang weel out o' prison—Cameron and Ryan."

"One's named Smith?"

"Na!"

'That one's named Smith," and Mr. Simmons licated Jane Cameron.

'That's Cameron—I hae seen her aboot these en years, I tell ye."

'Oh!"

Mr. Simmons walked away, revolving in his ıd this new discovery. His wife had intro-ɔed Jane by the name of Smith to him, and e was a mystery that required clearing up. : the first time a doubt of his wife shot through brain; he began to think of how he had ome acquainted with her, and what a little he ɔw of all her antecedents. He was no model ıracter—fit for a novel, for instance—for he ı naturally a suspicious man, a man who ıped readily at conclusions, shrewd and hard his way.

He went home, as Jane ascertained afterwards, ɔross-question his wife on the subject, and try elicit the reason for her attempt to deceive ı.

'I've met your friend Smith to-night," he l.

'Smith! what Smith?"

"Jane Smith, who was here one morning when I came home from work."

"Indeed!" was all that Mary could reply.

"Her name is Smith, is it not?" was the careless question.

Mary answered in the affirmative.

"And you worked at the cotton-mill together, and you lived together in the closes?"

Mary did not know what to answer, or what Jane might have told him, if he had met her that night. She turned red and white at the approach of danger; but she did her best to meet it.

"Yes, we lived thegither noo and then."

"She's a bad character."

"She was a gude lassie when I kenned her faist."

"She's been bad from a child; she has been watched as a bad character by the police. Mary, you must have known this."

Mary denied it; it was her last hope to cling to at this juncture, and she maintained her ignorance of the dark side to her old friend's character. Simmons affected to believe it, and, for a day or two, the storm which had been threatening passed over. The husband went to work again,

and kept his doubts in the background for a while; but he did not return home quite so regularly, and he made the acquaintance of one or two policemen, from whom he by degrees learned the whole truth. Piece by piece he gathered the whole history of Jane Cameron—worse than that, the whole past history of Mary Loggie—and then he sought Cameron again, and asked her to come with him across the bridge.

"What for?"

"I want you to see Mary—will you come?"

"I dinna mind."

Jane saw that something had gone wrong, and was a little curious, although timid. She had a belief that Mr. Simmons had discovered all, and she was anxious to see how Mary would stand against the attack, and what would become of her now all the truth had leaped to the light. So she went home with Mary's husband to see the end of it.

When they came in together, Mary dropped down in a chair by the fireside and stared at them—the "whole truth" suggested itself to her

at once. Her husband's past quietness, and even coldness, was accounted for.

"I ne'er saw in a' my leef before sic a luke as hers," commented Jane Cameron upon the scene.

"This woman's name is Cameron—let her deny it if she can now?" he said, on entering.

"I dinna deny it," said Jane, defiantly.

"And she was a bad character when you knew her, Mary, and you knew that too, and was a bad one yourself. There, that's the truth, and you can't say No to it."

Mary wrung her hands and looked piteously towards her husband. There was no sympathy with her alarm, and she turned on Jane like a fury. "Ye hae doon this—ye hae told him a', ye jealous, wicked woman—ye hae turned against me, because ye could na bear me to live honest, or be anythin but the thief I was before I married him."

"I hae said naethin," screamed Jane, anxious to put Mary on her guard against self-confession; "I ken naethin; I hae ony come hither 'cause he asked me, Mary."

"But I know all. Don't let us have any lies," said he, roughly. After a while he turned to his wife, saying—

"Mary, I took you for an honest girl, and married you. If I had known what you had been all your life—a thief, and worse—I would have blown my brains out first. You led me to believe that you were a good girl, and made me play the fool and marry you. You've disgraced me, and—you must go!"

"Oh! John, John, dinna sae that!"

Mary flung herself on her knees before him and clasped his legs round with her arms. She begged him to hear her—she prayed him to believe that she loved him very dearly, and had been living an upright life ever since she had known him. She told her whole story between her choking sobs, and called God to witness how she had lived only for him, thought only of him, since their marriage—how the secret of her guilty life had preyed upon her, because she feared to tell him the whole truth.

"You are in league with this girl still?" said Simmons, in reply to this.

Cameron took a fearful oath on the spot, that they had only met once by chance on Hutcheson's Bridge, and that Mary had made her promise never to see her again. Cameron, in tears, too, moved by this scene as she had never before been moved in her life, pleaded for the old friend until he bade her be silent—he did not want to hear *her* speak again.

Mary Loggie continued to plead like one whose life was at stake. She had had a glimpse of a new existence, and fought hard not to be hurled back to the old—she swore to be always true and faithful to him, and keep away from such as Jane for ever—she lay on the floor at last, and moaned for mercy at his feet. The fate of Mary's future trembled in the balance, but the man had a generous heart, and was moved by his wife's pleading. He was a poor man, with not over-refined feelings, and she had been a help—even a comfort—to him. Before the discovery they had lived very happily together, and it *did* seem hard to cast her back to the streets. When he was convinced that Mary had wished to keep away from all who belonged to the past, he softened,

and at last he told her to get up and give over crying—he would not say any more about it—*he would try her!*

"*You* can go as soon as you like," he said to Cameron, and Jane went down stairs wondrously relieved in mind to know that it had all ended satisfactorily.

So the romance ended; and it is to be trusted that Mary made Simmons a good wife. Jane believed that she did—acting on her belief, I think so too. Jane saw her again once or twice in the Glasgow streets, but Mary always turned her head away when they met, and hurried past for her life.

"I was too bad for her," said Jane, in this place, "and I daresay her heart was gude eno' to speak, if I had wished, which I didn't for her ain sake. But mawbee it war a narrow escape for puir Mary, Miss."

CHAPTER XXVI.

A THIEVES' HERO.

MARY LOGGIE'S story brought no moral to Jane Cameron. It did not appertain to her life, or in any way affect it; she could not profit, or see her way to profit, by any phase which had been represented therein. She saw that it was more *comfortable* to be honest, but she was past making a strenuous effort to keep in the right way; it was beyond her efforts, and there was no inducement in her mind to persevere. With a little sigh of regret that she had had no chance like Mary's, she turned away to the darkness of her own life, and went downwards—downwards by that law of moral gravitation which sinks the erring irredeemably.

To characters like Jane Cameron, there is seldom

any turning back—they will acknowledge no power to save them. "You should have taught me better when I was young—you should have seen after me when I was a child, you *good* people!" sneers the criminal, to whom it is more easy to continue in the old life than to make an effort for a better one. Crime has not the strength for self-denial; and *habit* renders the crime easy, and cases the conscience in mail. Jane Cameron continued the old life, then; she never gave a thought to an existence that might be purer—the evil of her ways was not apparent—it was simply a business which she was following—a business that kept her from starving, or working laboriously for a living. She and her contemporaries were forced to do a little work by way of precautionary measures—needle-work sufficient to mark one particular finger, or even shoemaking to harden the hands. The detectives had an unpleasant habit of stopping doubtful characters at times and shaking hands with them, and if the hands were soft and lady-like, why, they were thieves' hands, and there was an amount of extra vigilance bestowed upon them in consequence.

It was the beginning of March when the

knavish fraternity of Glasgow was thrown into a ferment by the sudden arrival of a hero—a Liverpool man, who had considered it advisable to absent himself from that quarter for a little while.

This man, whom I will call Black Barney—it is his thieves' cognomen, "with a difference"—was a man well known to thieves and police. London, which alone establishes a thief's reputation, as it establishes an actor or author's, had "made" this man in his peculiar rank of life; he had committed more desperate robberies without detection than any one of his time or age, perhaps. For this he was reverenced by those who made theft their profession; he was their model character, at whose style they aimed, and whose eccentricities they copied; he was the *thief* "who could do no wrong!"

The police were well acquainted with this man; knew him for the desperate scamp that he was, but were not so thoroughly versed in all his deeds and misdeeds. Robberies with which he was not suspected to be connected were often of his perpetration, and this made him a celebrity

amongst those who esteem a man highly who does a thing "on the quiet."

He was the thieves' modern Jack Sheppard: he had *earned* thousands of pounds in his day; he was clever as a burglar, and he was inimitable as a garotter. He had broken out of gaol twice, and this feat of prison-breaking was the nimbus of glory round his head. A man who could escape the hold of the law which had "lagged" him, was a man one did not meet every day.

Thieves over-estimate their heroes. "He was a beautiful scholar, and could pass for a gentleman anywhere," it was reported and generally believed. I have seen a letter of this Crichton's, wherein every word over one syllable was mis-spelt, and I have no doubt his gentlemanly airs were of that demonstrative character which sets the mimic a long way apart from the model.

Still, to thieves he was a hero, and with thieves we have only to do yet awhile. When he arrived in Glasgow there was a little friendly gathering in his honour—a "free-and-easy," where he took the chair, and where much whiskey was drunk,

and all his old friends and co-mates gathered around him. The police looked in during the evening, not to mar the general hilarity, but to take a glance at the surface of things, and exchange friendly nods with "the hero."

"What! Barney, have you given us a call, then?"

"Just for a day or two."

"Keep yourself quiet, Barney."

"All right. Only here for my health's sake."

The police were invited to drink, and treated with much courtesy, but the assembly breathed freer when the door closed on them, and the meeting put on its natural dress again.

Jane Cameron saw Black Barney for the first time at the free-and-easy to which I allude. She had heard of his acquirements—listened to all the exaggerated statements of his cleverness which had floated about, and looked upon him, from her humble position, as the author of "Lines to my Dog" in the poet's corner of a country newspaper may look upon Charles Dickens, whenever he gets a sight of that gentleman.

Had she maintained this respect and distant admiration for Black Barney, it might have

been all the better for her, or at least this story—if it had been ever written at all—would have had a different ending; but Black Barney was a ladies' man, and inclined to pay the fair sex attention. Before the evening was over, a dance had even been struck up, and Barney, who added dancing to his other and varied accomplishments, selected Jane Cameron more than once for his partner, to the mortification of Ann Ryan and other young ladies who were inclined to set their caps at him.

Barney was a man of sudden fancies, even eccentric tastes. Though there were many prettier girls in the room, he devoted himself to Jane Cameron, till some jokes, more forcible than select, at his preference, showered upon him from all sides. Still Barney loved a jest, and was not to be laughed out of his preference, and Jane was elated at her victory, and took no heed of invidious comments.

The "lion" of the night was a low-browed, villanous fellow, short, thick-set, and with one shoulder higher than the other, but he was the clever thief who had made money, and been more than commonly successful; and we are valued

according to our success rather than our merit, a writer of old days has observed very satirically, but very truthfully.

Therefore Jane Cameron may be said to have fallen in love with this successful scoundrel. He singled her out and flattered her, and Jane's head was turned on the instant. She felt that she could go through fire and water, even die for him, if need were. If she were lucky enough to secure him for a companion, she would consider herself the happiest woman in the world—happier than even Mary Loggie, who had so fine a home of her own! She did her best to captivate this hero—she was a quick-witted girl, with a certain amount of humour—she had a good voice, she could dance well—she was young and rather pretty, and the "lion," Barney, was smitten by the Scotch lassie.

Matches between thieves are soon struck up, and generally known. Barney's choice was avowed, and Barney's choice respected from that time forth.

Jane knew nothing of Black Barney's character or antecedents—did not care for them. It

was very likely that he would soon tire of her, and go off to Liverpool or London without her, but there would be time enough to fret about *that* when the hour came! The present, the awfully-guilty present, was sufficient for her. One who lives like Cameron can never look forward to the future, where the reaction comes, and where sin is not masked by vain imaginations. Crime never reflects on the Afterwards.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"IN LUCK'S WAY."

BLACK BARNEY and Jane Cameron rented a room together in the Tontine Close—an infamous haunt, at that time bearing as bad a name in Glasgow as the New Vennel. Black Barney, although he had informed the police that he had come to Glasgow for his health's sake, had really arrived to try his fortunes for a while in the Scotch city. He had become too well known in his old quarters, and his peculiar "style" had attracted too much attention to render Liverpool safe any longer.

Once before he had found Glasgow worth visiting, and the thought had suggested itself that it was a good time of the year for business—the nights

still being long, and the place always full of "company." He had a love for shipping-towns and cities; for those who had come long journeys, and many of whom carried their fortunes in their pocket-books. At Liverpool, Southampton, Portsmouth, even Gravesend, he had always met with plenty of people who had money to lose. He came to Glasgow in search of fresh fortune; his money had nearly run out, and one of the luckiest men in the profession had not more than a sovereign left from all the cash unlawfully acquired in the course of his life!

He was a great spendthrift as well as a great thief, and hence his popularity amongst the class he always "stood treat to." He had lived like a gentleman whilst the money lasted—he had no idea of putting by for the rainy day, which he was sanguine enough to believe would never fall to his share. He was a crafty man, and certainly ingenious. When he had taken Cameron "under his protection," he initiated her into ways and styles of thieving that were new to her, and which, with a little practice, were readily acquired. He taught her to pick pockets with a

rapidity of which she had had no previous conception, and he showed her a new system of snatching at a watch and severing it from the chain which had never failed yet in its results. Jane was an apt pupil, and Black Barney was a flatterer, who gave her more praise than she deserved. This was a habit of Barney's, as it led to strenuous efforts to deserve praise on the part of his pupils.

Jane did her best, and became more daring, until a narrow escape taught her the old lesson of prudence. She had been detected and chased down the Old Wynd by the robbed one, but, managing to elude her pursuer, she resolved on greater caution in future. She thought with a shudder of the police cell, the sheriff court, and then prison again; of losing the adorable Barney, and hearing in prison, perhaps, that he had taken up with somebody else!

Caution in all respects, or the days of freedom would soon be over with her. Barney and she used to talk of prison a great deal; he looked upon gaol in a very different light to Cameron, and feigned to care nothing for it.

"If I had a run of ill luck, I wouldn't mind gaol a ha'porth," he said; "it's when one's in full swing that it's a nuisance to be brought up with a jerk." He was full of reminiscences. He related anecdotes of his criminal career, in which Cameron placed credence and re-related, but they are almost too fabulous for public acceptation. They are exaggerated statements—some of them not excluding even the members of the police force from charges not worth repeating here. Black Barney was vain of his exploits, and dazzled all auditors by his recapitulations of them. But Black Barney loved not truth, or was more clever than I give him credit for being in these pages.

His general advice to Jane may be worth recording, and may help to put the world upon its guard. It is a thief's advice, and by thieves practised, and those who would "take care of their pockets" may profit by being wary under similar circumstances:—

"Read the newspaper attentively; or, if you cannot read, let others do so for you. Attend every grand concert, play, ball, or assembly, or wait about the doors of such places till the

company come out. Frequent the precincts of the chief hotels wherever you are, and study your characters as they issue forth; try the club-houses, and, whenever you see a public dinner advertised, haunt that place where the dinner has been given, and *follow* him who *walks home unsteadily.* Railway carriages are good places, but omnibuses are better. There's a good chance in a fit in a street, and in crowded shops of a Saturday night you are sure to get something, although *nothing of any very great amount.* In the winter-time, watch the suburban districts, more especially about Christmas-time, when there is considerable party-giving. You may pick up a swell returning home late, or, if the plate's not fetched home from the house—there is a great deal of silver lent on hire—there's a chance of getting a haul by breaking in the following night, when the good people have retired early to bed to make up for the previous night's dissipation. Attend all public spectacles and public rejoicings—never leave the outside of a theatre till the last man has come forth and the doors are closed. Music halls are worth watching also, but swells are not

picked up very frequently. Prize fights are considered safe; and horse races of all kinds turn in the gold watches and breast-pins. People are off their guard in church, but unfortunately carry very little money there. Empty carriages waiting in line to take up from the opera are worth studying—generally something inside, but a difficulty in getting it away, unless one is particularly agile. Outside west-end print and picture shops a first-rate chance, and at railway stations generally something to be made, until the police are familiar with your appearance and order you off the premises. Watch outside banking-houses; difficult work, owing to the detectives; but, if not known, worth the trial."

Such was the substance of Barney's advice. These are the general rules, or rather an abstract of them, by which thieves are governed. The streets swarm with thieves, and they are always on the watch—they must watch to live. There is scarcely a reader of this book, perhaps, who has not been watched and followed in his time—a marked man, to be pounced upon at the first opportunity; and, if he has not been

robbed, it is owing to his own precaution, or to a chance incident, which has rendered an attack too full of risk to be ventured upon.

Barney's advice concerning railway stations was followed just at this juncture; he was partial to those termini where travellers arrive in a confused state and are generally well provided with money; he thought something might be made at the Glasgow terminus, and he set himself to study the matter. The chief terminus was in Buchanan Street, adjacent to George Square, and therefore not handy to the closes and courts, where one might quickly disappear. There is always danger at a railway terminus when situated in a respectable neighbourhood—Euston Square neighbourhood is not considered so "lucky" as the Eastern Counties, for instance.

Black Barney, towards the end of March, hit upon a scheme which he had heretofore practised with success. As it led to a change of scene and life for Cameron, it may be necessary to more closely allude to it.

Barney's character was so well known on the "Thieves' Exchange," that at a fair per-centage

he could always contrive to borrow a little money, or a decent suit of clothes from the receivers. To the receivers he applied, then, and equipped himself and Cameron in the most quiet but the best apparel the proprietor could produce upon an emergency.

Barney and Jane then walked out of Glasgow by a circuitous route, and made for the first railway station from the city, where there were no police about to recognize them and interfere with their projects. From here to Carlisle by a slow train went Barney and Jane. At Carlisle they were unknown, and experienced the novel sensation of being taken for respectable people. By way of keeping up appearances, they stayed one night at a quiet inn in the neighbourhood, and remained perfectly honest, enjoying themselves in a homely fashion, and paying their bill with scrupulous exactitude the next evening, when it became time to go down to the station and wait for the express train.

They were anxious to catch the express in particular—rich people travelled by express to the North, and they might be fortunate to meet

with one who would be unsuspicious of his fellow-men. In due course the express arrived: there was a stoppage of some minutes, during which Black Barney's quick eyes "took stock" of every first-class compartment, and with business-like celerity fixed at last upon one, which a stout old gentleman was re-entering with some difficulty.

Barney and Jane followed—Barney taking up his position opposite the traveller, folding his arms and closing his eyes immediately as though weary with travelling. The old gentleman glanced from him to Jane, in a half-critical, half-dreamy manner—the usual mode of receiving fresh arrivals—then unsuspiciously opened a book and began reading by the light of the lamp in the roof. Cameron sat quiet and composed on the gentleman's side of the carriage—and both waited their time, and were not outwardly excited by the chances there might be of securing something feloniously.

Barney had made his choice with grave deliberation, and had not entered the carriage till the last moment. Jane had even suggested another

compartment to him, and he had answered, "No go, commercial"—which I append here for the satisfaction of commercial gentlemen, who are ranked by no mean authority as being difficult to steal from, and at least not worth the risk whilst travelling. "A commercial gent never has more than a couple of pounds in his pocket," Janè Cameron was informed. If this be correct as a rule, the commercial world travels in a careful and praiseworthy manner.

The train started from Carlisle, and the birds of prey watched their purposed victim, and were thankful that no further arrivals were likely to disturb the plans they had in view. They watched their victim and bided their time—it had been arranged between them that nothing should be done till the train was close to Glasgow.

"If it's a bad spec, Jennie," he had advised, "we must separate at the terminus, and each work for ourselves on any one who comes handy. We shall get a ticker, at all events. Go out of the station as soon as possible, and then home. Don't wait for me—don't look about for me."

All the way to Glasgow on the watch, silent

and furtive. The old gentleman closed his book and went off to sleep, and Jennie looked across to Barney, who shook his head. It would have been possible to have secured his watch, but he must have missed it before reaching Glasgow, and very naturally have suspected, possibly charged, the occupants of his carriage with the theft. Close upon Glasgow tickets were collected, and the old gentleman took his ticket from a purse which he drew from his trousers' pocket and then returned. Jennie and Barney exchanged glances again.

The train rattled under Glasgow terminus at last, and all was confusion and bustle on the instant, Barney and Jane retaining their seats in the carriage and allowing the old gentleman to depart in advance of them. As he stood up and was leaning forward to alight, Barney very politely offered him one hand, and went rapidly to work with the other—in an instant, and as if by magic, gold watch and chain, and the little pocket-book in which the railway ticket had been kept, were passed to Cameron. Barney leaped quickly after his victim and went rapidly out of the terminus. Jane went in the opposite direction with the booty. The

old gentleman, still unconscious of his loss, proceeded with the guard in the direction of the luggage-van.

In the room at the Tontine Close, Jane found Black Barney anxiously awaiting her.

"You haven't opened the purse—you haven't touched the things?" he cried, eagerly.

"Do ye think I'd do sic a thing?"

"Some would—but you wouldn't, Jennie. It wouldn't be like you," he affirmed.

"I should think not," asserted Jennie, proudly.

"As if I would hae ta'en a mite o' siller frae *him*!" added Jennie, while relating this anecdote.

The purse, watch and chain were laid upon the table, the bolt was drawn, Barney took up his coat and hung it over the door to keep the light from shining through the crevices and balk glances that might be curious, and then he and Jane sat down with the candle between them, and the booty before them.

"Something tells me we've been a lucky journey, Jennie," he said, chuckling; "let the purse bide till the last."

He took up the watch, opened the case and

examined the works, weighed the chain in his hands, criticized the seal; finally, and when Cameron's patience was almost exhausted, thrust it to the depths of his pocket and took up the purse.

"Now then."

The two robbers' heads touched, Cameron held her breath with surprise; the opening of purses is an exciting event in the life of one who lives by stealing them.

"It's heavy."

Then the pockets were opened and the booty estimated. Black Barney became excited, jumped up and danced about the room, swore and blasphemed, and blessed his stars all in one breath.

"We *are* in luck's way, Jane, by ——. Hurrah! this *is* first-rate, my lass. Bless everybody—bless Glasgow!"

"How much, Barney?"

"A hundred pounds odd—eighty-five in flimsies—we'll have a 'fling' now, my girl."

"Hadn't we better change the notes, and pawn the watch at once?"

This was the common practice; but Barney was not of the common order of thieves, it appeared. He spurned such suggestions.

"No, we'll go to London and get rid of them —there are better places in town, and we shall be found out here, if we try to sell or pawn anything. We'll change our clothes, and go third class to London by the 'parliamentary.' Keep quiet about this."

They had friends who looked in upon them in the Tontine Close, late as the hour was; but Barney made no mention of his success, and for once was not in a boastful mood. When he felt more safe, and the money was all spent, he would brag of this new crow's feather in his cap.

The same night also Barney paid his debts, returned the clothes he had borrowed, and then Jane and he sat up and talked over the holiday they intended to give themselves until the money was spent. Jane had never had a "first-rate holiday," where thieving was wholly given up for pleasure, and one could live an honest lady in a place where nobody knew anything.

Barney and she started in humble guise, adopting the precaution of walking to Garnkirk station in lieu of starting from Glasgow terminus, where

the police might be suspicious of thieves leaving suddenly for London.

"I did na feel safe with sae muckle money until we were aff," commented Cameron, "and then my speerits rose with Barney's. Ah! it was a grand holiday while it lasted—the ony ane I had. Well," with a sigh that was not all penitence then, I fear, "I *was* happy, just for a weel!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THIEVES' HOLIDAY.

THE reader may be curious to know how a thief's holiday is spent; or rather, how this holiday was spent in particular. For thieves have various ways of enjoying the proceeds of "a good find," and are not all so high in their notions as Black Barney. To hang about the streets, smoke, drink, and pay for the smoke and drink of others, is real enjoyment to ninety out of a hundred; the one-tenth remaining are of the Barney class, who seek change of air and scene, and plunge into every gaiety whilst the money lasts that has been unlawfully acquired. I follow this holiday somewhat minutely, because it illustrates a new feature,

which was ever a bright reminiscence in Cameron's career; and for the second reason, that it ended in a burlesque fashion, at which Cameron, by the way, never saw anything to laugh.

They proceeded slowly to London, and for the first time in her life Jane saw the great city.

"It's like Glasgie, Barney," she said.

"Not a bit—Glasgow's nothing to it."

Jane and he went at once to Westminster, where a gentleman was found who transacted some business in a very quick manner, and with a very few words. The watch, chain, and bank notes passed from the thief's to the receiver's hands. Barney knew the price of these valuables to a farthing, and the purchaser agreed with his valuation; there was no haggling—and the bullion—"the real thing"—was passed over to Barney, who filled his pockets, bade the gentleman good day, and departed. Thence to a wardrobe-keeper's, also known to Barney, who appeared familiar with everybody in London, where Jane and he dressed themselves up to their heart's desire—Jane in silk and a velvet mantle—Barney in black, with a silk velvet waistcoat. Further dress

purchases were consigned to the depths of a portmanteau, for which Barney made a bid, and which bid was accepted; and then a cab was called, and away they went again to an hotel in Leicester Square.

They abandoned every thought of their profession from that time forth—life was made for enjoyment, Barney thought, and why should they be continually picking and stealing? They dined sumptuously, "with sherry-wine for dinner, alwa," and went off to the play in the evening—to the pit of the play, where they sat like other folk, and enjoyed the performance. The next day they went to Richmond, the next to Greenwich, the third to Gravesend, returning home always in time for the play in the evening. They made no acquaintances; Barney shunned all old faces; he crossed the roads rapidly whenever he detected at a distance any representatives of the gangs with which he had been associated; he wished to "sink the shop," and enjoy the holiday in his own quiet fashion, and like a gentleman. After the plays, they had supper and grog in their own room, drinking deeply, and retiring far from

sober to rest—in the morning, they went off in search of pleasure again.

Barney counted his money every morning before starting. "Only three pounds out of the lot gone yet, Jennie," he would say; then "only five—seven," and so on. And they had a hundred pounds to spend altogether—a hundred pounds, which Barney always carried about with him.

Barney and Cameron stayed in London about a fortnight, and then set forth to Brighton, where they took the sea air, and enjoyed themselves—patronizing the fly-men to a great extent, and supporting all the amusements that were to be found in the town. Brighton becoming dull, they went back to London, where there were more of the amusements, of which they never tired; but it is a singular fact to relate, that, mixing amongst crowds of all descriptions, and often seeing the chances presented to possess themselves of something, this strange couple never attempted to steal during their holiday.

Jane was even more anxious than Barney to keep honest. It was her first holiday, and

Barney's fourth. She had never "lived like a lady" before, and the contrast to life in a close must have been bewildering and entrancing. It left an impression on Cameron's mind that was never obliterated. Possibly she never repented *that* "change." Sorry as she was in the future for all the ills she had committed, she always spoke enthusiastically of that one era in her life—a life spent in sin with her companion—but still a life so different to anything that had been in the present, or remained in store for her in the future.

By the middle of June, Barney, counting his money one morning, discovered that he was fifty pounds less in pocket than when he had started from Glasgow.

"We'll go down to the sea-side again," he said, "and get rid of the rest of it. When we're run down to the last five pounds, we'll try our hands at something, and make a bolt for Glasgow. That Glasgow's a lucky place, girl."

They proceeded to Margate on the following day, and took private rooms at a second-class inn there. The company began to fill in that

little town, and Barney and his companion to enjoy the change of air. There were raffle-tables then—there may be now—at the bazaars in the main street; and here Barney was accustomed to take his place in the evening, and raffle away for two, three, and five pound prizes. It was mere reckless waste of money and love of gambling, for, had he won an ornament of the value of five pounds, he would not have known what to do with it. But the rattle of the dice-box had its attractions, and at the end of the first week he found an important deficit in the exchequer.

"This won't do, Jennie, we're going it too fast now," he said. But in the evening of the day on which that moral reflection was made he was lured again to the bazaar, where he raffled for an hour. At the end of that hour he came to Cameron, looking hot and fierce. Cameron had strolled away to the extremity of the room, where there was music.

"Jennie," he said in a hoarse whisper, "have you been playing a trick with me now?"

"A trick?—no. What do ye mean?"

"Just this," with a half groan of rage and vex-

ation of spirit; "some d——d thief has been and picked my pocket!"

This was a favourite prison anecdote of Jane Cameron's at Millbank and Brixton prisons—it was something for others to laugh at then, but it was a death-blow to her and her holiday at that time.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LONDON TO GLASGOW.

BLACK BARNEY and Jane Cameron went out of the bazaar to hold council together over the sad event which had befallen them. It was an irremediable calamity; there was no hope—complaining to the police would be impolitic—and there was not even a faint chance of knowing the offender, and claiming the money back on the strength of being a member of the fraternity.

"If ye had na carried a' the gowd, Barney," complained Cameron.

"Ah! if I hadn't done this, and I hadn't done that—that's allus the way with you women," retorted he: "what have you done with that sovereign I gave you?"

"It's in my pocket still."

"That'll carry us to London."

"But the inn bill for last week?"

"We must 'bilk' that," was the ungraceful reply.

They went home in low spirits—Barney was not alone depressed, but in a very bad humour to boot. His vanity was piqued—he, the prince of thieves, had had his pocket picked of thirty or forty pounds, and was left a beggar in a strange land! How they would all laugh at him, if the story ever got wind amongst his fellows!

"Don't say anything about this," said Barney; "it's as well to make believe that we've spent it. We don't want to be made fun of, you understand."

Jane made the desired promise, and then Barney ordered whiskey and water, and cursed the spoiler of his pleasure, the robber of his hard-earned money, over his grog.

Late at night he prowled about the passages of the inn in hopes of a windfall, but everyone had locked his door. He went down stairs into the bar, in the hope of "doing the lob," that

is, robbing the till, but the landlord had carried it up to bed with him, as a less sagacious man than Black Barney might have anticipated. He came upstairs, sat by the side of the bed wherein Jane was, and began to swear again.

"We ne'er slept a wink—he swore and I cried till it cam daylight, and all the whiskey was gane," remarked Jane.

In the morning Barney ordered a substantial breakfast of rumpsteaks and mushrooms—gave directions about his dinner at six—he was going to Ramsgate, and should not be back till that hour, he said—and then Jane and he put on their best clothes, and went out of the inn never to return. They packed away the few things that were handy in their pockets, left the portmanteau and their worst dresses in the bed-room, and walked to the railway station, where they took tickets to London, paying for them out of the last sovereign they possessed in the world.

Arrived in London, Barney woke up to business at once. He mixed with the crowd stream-

ing out of the railway carriages, and tried one or two pockets, which were empty as his own—pocket-handkerchiefs and such trifles Barney had always had a soul above—and he emerged out of the South-Eastern Terminus still a penniless man. The police looked at him as he came forth into the London streets—one even nodded towards him, and said, "Ah! Barney," in a friendly way, which Barney did not cordially respond to. They went over London Bridge, towards the east end of London, Barney leading the way, with his hands in his empty pockets.

"Where are we ganging, Barney?"

"You'll see presently."

"Oh! I wish I war in Glasgie agin."

"I daresay you do. That's not likely, just at pre sent.'

"Will naebody lend us the money, Barney?"

"I'm not going to Glasgow yet awhile. If you're in a hurry, you can go without me."

Jane was silent after this; she had learned to love this man very passionately, and she feared losing him. If he were to turn her off

in the London streets, what would become of her, she thought—she who had been of the "streets —streety" all her life?

Black Barney repaired to a noted thieves' house of call, that was in existence then in Cates Street, Whitechapel, where he was well received by the members at home at the time.

They were glad to see the old face; they shook him by the hands, and wished long life to him; they gave Jenny a hearty welcome; they brought forth beer, gin and pipes; they sent the news forth that Black Barney had "turned up" in Cates Street, and, before the night was fairly in, a goodly muster of London thieves had assembled to do honour to the arrival.

Barney took the compliments bestowed upon him in a royal manner, said nothing about being short of money—a bad confession to make in thieves' society, even if you happen to be a thief yourself—and told a great many falsehoods concerning his latest experience, to account for being so well dressed.

In this house a week or two were passed, and Jane Cameron was taken into the crowded East

End thoroughfares, shown the shortest routes to Cates Street, and left by Barney to do the best for herself and him that circumstances would allow. A new face always succeeds for a time; and the face of Cameron was totally unknown to the London police. For the fortnight she shifted from place to place—from Bishopsgate Street to Ratcliffe Highway, thence to Shoreditch, thence to the Minories, Fenchurch Street, &c., proving herself a pickpocket who had acquired no mean skill, by practice of long and sinful years. Jane became a favourite at Cates Street, for she earned money, and, although it was a little at a time, yet the amount began to increase, and Barney to assume a more amiable demeanour in consequence.

"Well, Jennie, how do you like London?"

He was informed that she did not like it at all—that she was anxious, very anxious, to get back to the Glasgow streets. No matter that her next sentence would go hard with her, and that she might begin, almost with impunity, a new life here, she pined for Glasgow; and Barney, who had his superstitions, and who had

been peculiarly "unlucky" in London, imagined that his fortunes lay in the North, where so good "a haul" had once been made.

They counted their earnings, and found that there was money to take them to Glasgow, and they resolved to depart the following day, previously changing their "best things" for something less conspicuous, and more suitable for third-class travelling. Then they went away to their old haunts, their old life, and arrived in Glasgow without accident.

Here commenced anew the old guilty life—if anything, a worse life than the old—for with every year of crime's progress the soul hardens more and more, until a something is produced which is scarcely akin to humanity. Here, in these busy streets of the old city, flowed on the dark current which had known no turning to the light—flowed on to the end, which came suddenly and abruptly in the midst of crime, and checked in mid career this sinner, whose life we are attempting. The time went on till the dark nights, for which thieves pray, began to lengthen more and more. Jane still lived

in guilty companionship with this man, who, whatever his faults, and however brutal he may have been, was at least kind, in his way, to her.

"He scarcely e'er gied me a wry word," said Jane, when alluding to him; "and yet he were an awfu' mon when his blude was oop."

Barney and Jane did not meet with a run of ill luck to counterbalance the good which they had had; their fortunes were varied, and, if they did not steal any more bank-notes, still they did not fall into absolute indigence. They rented a small room in one of the closes, and gathered around them a host of thieves and bad characters. Theirs became a close which required extra surveillance, more robberies occurring in its neighbourhood than were justified by—statistics. They fenced off the police raids as well as possible; they were silent, crafty, and on guard, and only a few of the most imprudent met with the punishment which the aggregate merited. They were all "known," which was bad for trade; but they "thrived

pretty well, considering," and the blackest sheep were still at liberty, despite official vigilance.

Organized plans of robbery were concocted in this close, and carried out with impunity—above the topmost story was a large loft in the roof, where stolen goods were hidden, or passed through a trap on to the tiles, and crossing the windows to the opposite side of the close was a drying-pole of extra thickness, which on more than one occasion a thief hard pressed had made use of, and climbed along into the opposite lodging-house.

It was a quiet house, where little drinking went on, unless strangers had been lured thither, and then drinking became business at once—it was a den of thieves of the vilest and worst description—if the question had lain between the sacrifice of human life or detection, human life would have been coolly set aside.

Jane Cameron may be said to have been wholly bad at this time—to have forgotten all and everything but her own passions, in her greed of other men's goods. She was eighteen years of age or thereabouts, but her face

had become lined, and her eyes sunken—the love of drink, which she had inherited from her mother, was growing upon her. After midnight she began drinking hard, when there was money to spare.

"When you get into trouble again, it'll be the drink, mind," warned Barney; "there's no keeping you straight now;" keeping straight being, in Black Barney's vocabulary, the art of depredation in a cool and scientific manner, with no disagreeable appendices.

This life, then, till the winter nights drew in more and more.

Here let us pause, before we attempt the description of the final act, which incurred a long sentence upon Jane Cameron—the final act of robbery, and one which shut her for many years from the troubled world in which she had played her part so long. After that deed to which we advert, Jane Cameron never stole again; her life assumed a different phase, and years of prison existence worked that amount of good in her, which months had failed in.

It was a slow and laborious process of regeneration—it was never, perhaps, that absolute, unselfish, eager repentance which characterizes one out of a thousand—out of more than a thousand—but it was at least a faltering, upward step to the bright land whereon the heaven was shining, and for that reason I have attempted it. At this halting-stage between two lives, it is a sad landscape to look back upon—there is no more sorrowful vista than that which, commencing from a neglected childhood, follows on to the night, to which comes so seldom a morning.

No such life, I take it, can be devoid of interest to right-thinking and earnest men. The watchmen with bell and lantern, who tread those paths, and cry, "Go back, go back!" I trust may not despair at the nature of their task, but keep ever energetic in God's work. If there be many failures—if, alas! there must be many failures—God be thanked that at least there comes a glorious victory over Satan at times, and the news of the conquest stirs the blood, and strengthens the heart and the will.

But I say again here, if that noble army of volunteers would cry "Go back!" at an earlier date—would stand, as a rule, not so far down the dark road, the good to follow would be immeasurably greater. With more volunteers to the work, with a whole army to scour our streets, and attack our worst habitations, what grand results might not ensue? To cry to the fever which is lurking in all ill-kept dwellings, "Go back, we will not have you, if cleanliness and order can keep you away"—to Poverty, "Stand back! this poor woman and poor man must not starve, or be tempted by the example of successful crime;" to say to Ignorance, "Go back for ever, and shame not those who have had the power to alter this, and yet have made no effort;" to say, above all, to Sin, "Back, thou shadow of human life, we fight you with God's Word, and the example of good men and women."

If all who have the power—and all who read this possess some little power to do good—would think of the poor, the poor man's dwelling-place, and, above all, the poor man's children,

now and then, the leisure-hours of the fortunate few might be the first step towards the salvation of the many, who, helpless and forgotten, pass unheeded over the brink. From the abyss wails the voice of the lost—shall we stand on the vantage-ground, and say, "We could have helped them with our money, with our friendship, with our prayers together, in their homes (remember that before the home is decent and poverty's wolf is away, prayer is of little avail), but we let them pass beyond all help, and turned our backs upon them!"

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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